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NOV/DEC 2025

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TIME & PLACE

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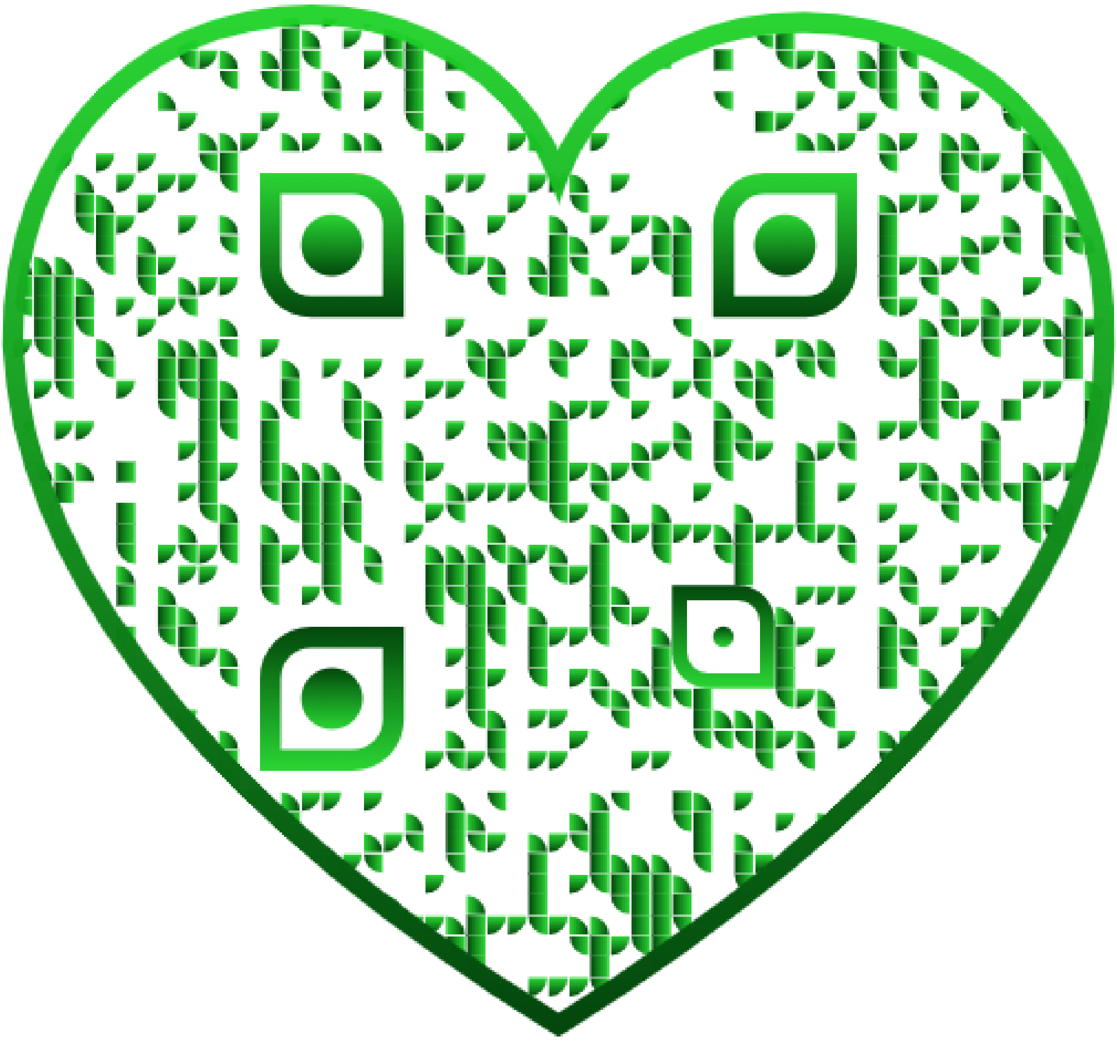

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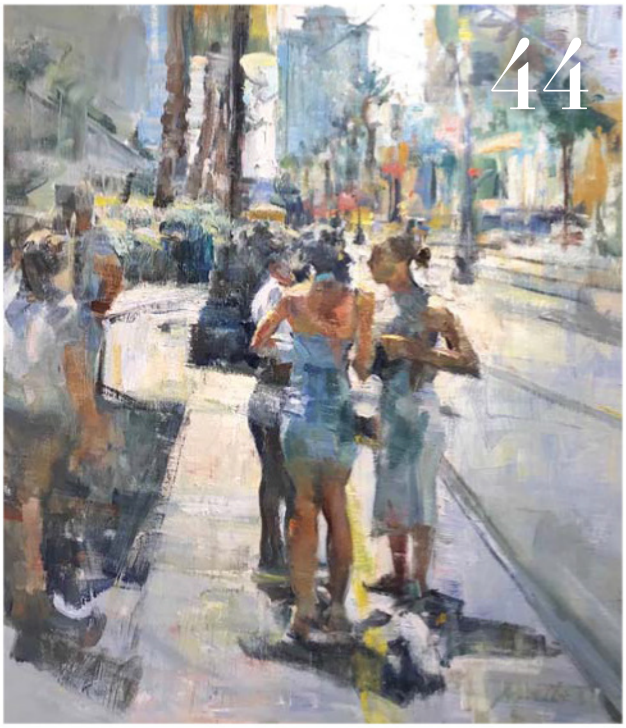

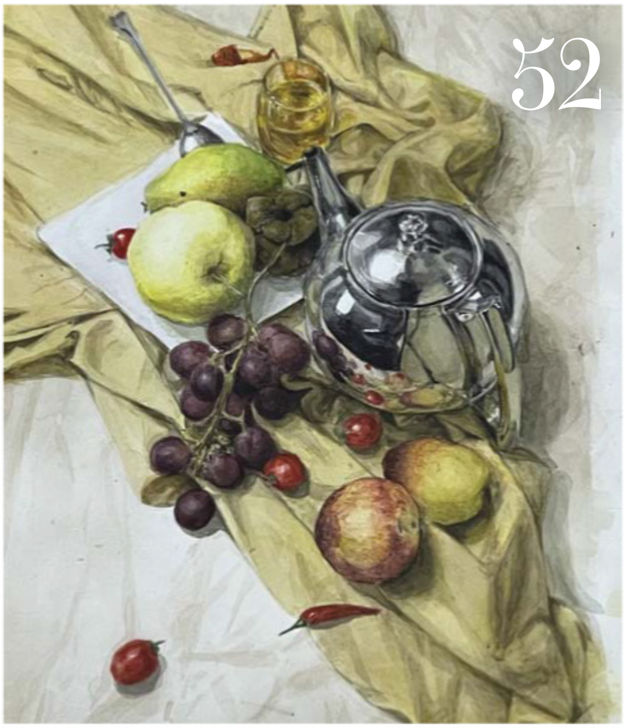

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Life is Learning to Fly (detail)
by Kathleen Giles

Splash 27

The Best of Watercolor Art Competition

Call for Entries!

Splash 27: The Best of Watercolor is now accepting entries! Presented by Artists Network and Watercolor Artist magazine, the Splash series has been celebrating the incredible work being done by contemporary artists working in watermedia since 1991. Open to artists across the globe, don't miss the chance to become one of this year's 100+ finalists selected for publication. This is THE watercolor event of the year.

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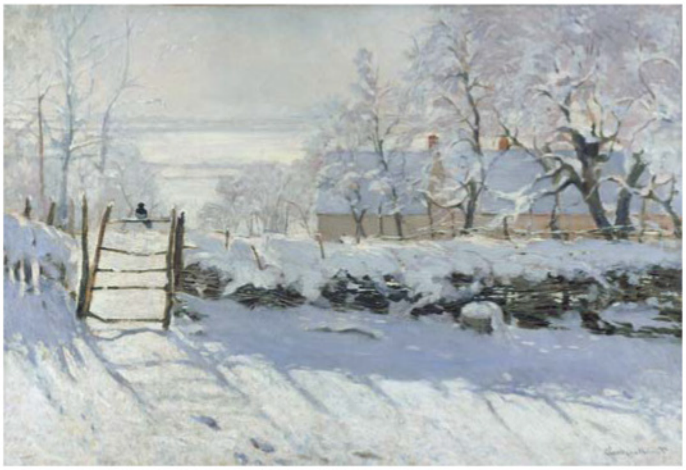
From The Editor



In his Impressionist masterpiece, **The Magpie** (1869; oil on canvas, 35x51), Claude Monet used color in the shadows—a new idea at the time—to capture what he observed in nature.

MUSÉE D'ORSAY, PARIS, FRANCE

MOMENTS OF MAGIC

Artists are unusually equipped for keen observation, often seeing beauty and interest in scenery and subjects that the more casual observer would typically overlook. But everyone—artists and non-artists alike—will from time to time stumble upon moments in everyday life that are visually arresting, that grab our attention for seemingly no reason: What is it about this random fallen log? That pile of shoes? That stop sign at the corner? It can feel mysterious, but almost always, the attraction stems from the character of the light. As artist Brian Cobble (page 36) says, "The right light can make an otherwise mundane scene seem momentarily magical."

Capturing these singular "moments in time" is a pursuit that motivates Cobble and many artists—regardless of their favored subjects. Inspiration can strike with the sight of a warm glow of afternoon light on a grove of trees, a group of figures in a dimly-lit bar or a vase of flowers throwing a dramatic shadow. In each case, the subject is not just the light, but the *mood* that the light creates.

> "It's enough to drive you crazy, trying to depict the weather, the atmosphere, the ambience." –CLAUDE MONET

For a lot of painters, it's the liminal spaces—the transition between late afternoon and evening, for example—that offer an especially enticing atmosphere. Mikael Olson (page 44) paints a lot of nocturnes for this reason. "I'm intrigued by the dusk and the transition from day to night, when electric lights come on," he says. "I'm paying attention to what light does at different times of day."

Keeping an open mind during the creative process can be helpful in articulating the story you want to convey about a particular place and moment. For Raymond Bonilla (page 28), the process plays a key role. "I let the painting decide how much information it needs in order to properly communicate its intended meaning," he says. "I try to 'listen' to the painting, and then get out of its way."

Capturing a sense of the magical, on paper or canvas, is no small challenge. As Claude Monet once said, "It's enough to drive you crazy." But, I think we can all agree, it's crazy in a good way.

Anne Hevener

ANNE HEVENER
Editor-in-Chief

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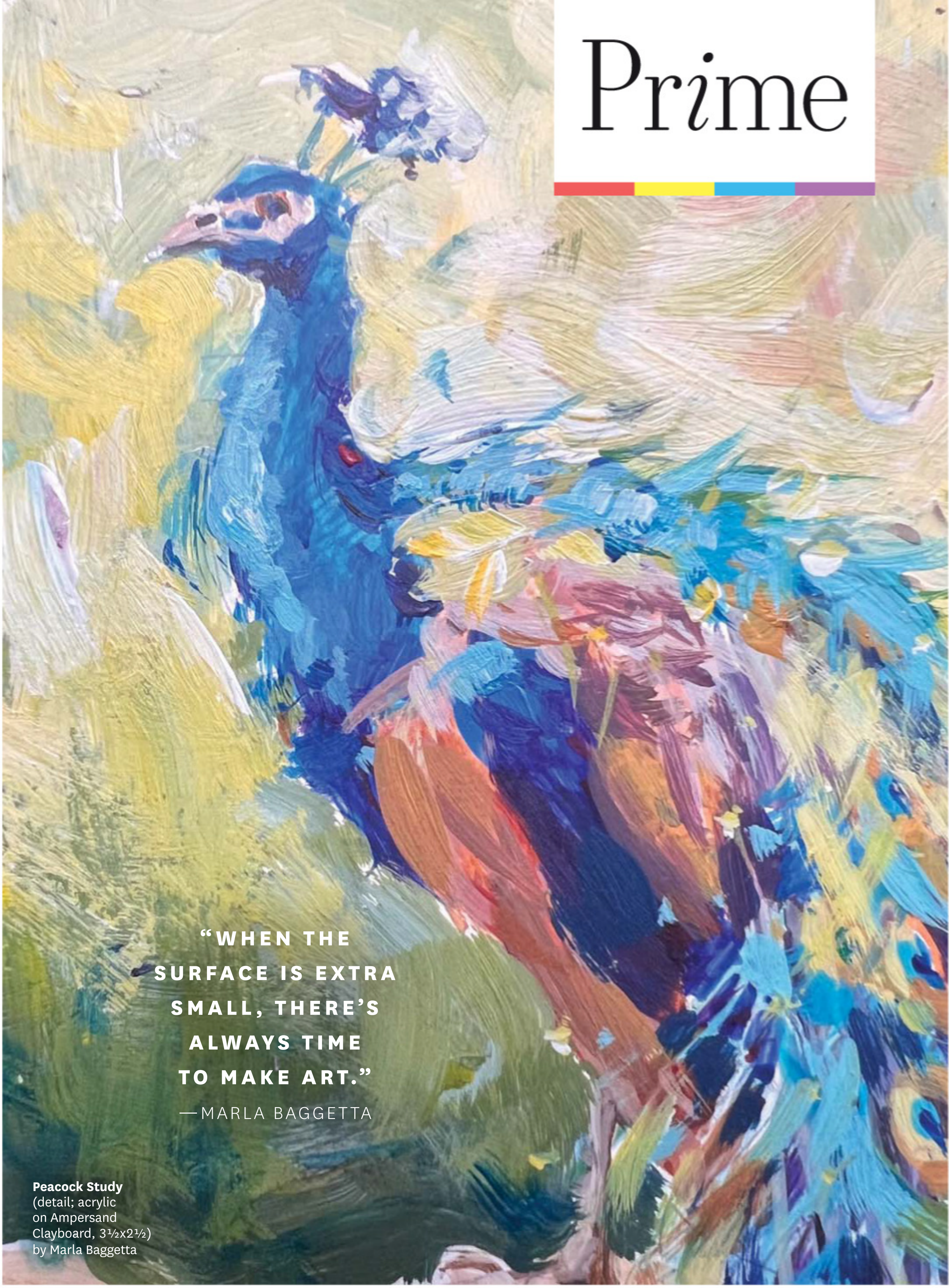
ArtistsNetwork

Prime



“WHEN THE SURFACE IS EXTRA SMALL, THERE’S ALWAYS TIME TO MAKE ART.”

—MARLA BAGGETTA

Peacock Study (detail; acrylic on Ampersand Clayboard, 3½x2½) by Marla Baggetta

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Christa Forrest relies on BLICK for her oil paints and other art essentials. “BLICK is like a playground for artists,” she says, “and has pretty much been my sole resource for going on 12 years now.”

ARTIST CHRISTA FORREST IS HERE TO TELL YOU THAT THERE’S NO PLACE FOR FEAR IN ART!

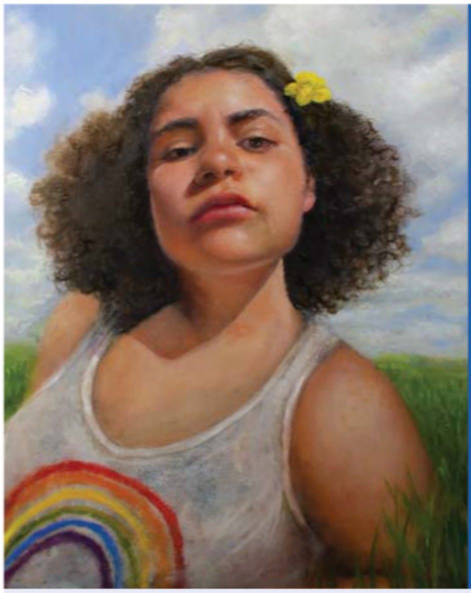
For artist Christa Forrest, there's a whole lot more to painting portraiture than capturing a good likeness. "The human face is a universe all its own," she says. "The uniqueness of features, the lines, the shadows and the small details of expression tell so many stories. I'm endlessly fascinated by how much vulnerability and strength can coexist in a single gaze. Portraiture isn't just about likeness for me; it's about capturing that invisible thread of feeling and connection we recognize when we look into someone else's eyes."

Forrest finds that many artists shy away from painting portraits, fearing it's too hard to get them right. "So many of my students tell me they're too scared to tackle it as a subject," she says. "Unlike an abstract painting filled with intuitive brushstrokes, the human face is so familiar that even the smallest misstep stands out. But the truth is, portraiture isn't really about perfection. It's about seeing and understanding what's in front of you."

The best way to break through those fears, Forrest says, is to focus on creating a consistent art practice. "Incorporate curiosity, not judgment," she says, "and make those mistakes. Let yourself get wonky. Start loose, play with shapes and focus on expression rather than accuracy. Condition your creative brain to 'see' and let yourself just *create*."

Learn more about award-winning artist Christa Forrest at creativesoulsart.com and follow her @christaforrestfineart.

Christa Forrest, in her studio, with a self-portrait on the easel. "Self-portraiture is like holding up a mirror to my soul," she says. "It's raw, honest, sometimes uncomfortable, but always revealing to me. I find that it nurtures my muse by giving me space to be both subject and observer, to reflect on who I'm becoming, and to experiment freely without the weight of expectation."



> "Art materials are the lifeblood of my practice. They're not just tools; they're collaborators. Having access to quality supplies through **BLICK** allows me to create freely, knowing the materials will respond the way I need them to. That kind of trust fuels creativity."
> —**CHRISTA FORREST**

YOUR MATERIALS MATTER

Christa Forrest loves all types of art media, but oil painting best suits her creative needs and personality. "I love how it allows me to push, pull and layer until the portrait feels alive," she says. "Oils give me time to work slowly or quickly—to carve out depth and luminosity."

The artist first encountered Utrecht Artists' Oil Colors at The Art Students League of New York, where many of her instructors swore by it. "Naturally, I followed suit," she says. "Since then, the paints have been a cornerstone in my practice." She appreciates that the oils offer an incredible value without compromising quality. "The pigments are rich," she says. "The consistency is buttery, yet firm enough to hold a brushstroke, which I love for expressive portraits. They also mix beautifully, which makes them perfect for the subtle shifts of skin tones I'm always chasing," she says.

Essential to Forrest's palette are Utrecht's Alizarin Crimson, Ultramarine Blue and Yellow Ochre. She also adds Titanium White, Burnt Sienna, and—in small amounts—Cadmium Red Light and Sap Green. With this palette, she says, "I can create endless variations of skin tones and expressive hues."

To encourage the bold, expressive marks she likes, Forrest opts mainly for long-handled round and filbert brushes, in various sizes, and some softer synthetics for blending. "My all-time favorites are the BLICK Scholastic White brushes," she says.

As for surface, the artist favors stretched linen canvas or cradled wood panels, which hold up well to layering and texture, but she has also been working on paper formulated for oil paint.

Forrest appreciates that she can find all of these materials at BLICK, where she finds obtaining and perusing art materials to be a real joy, and where the many options encourage discovery. She also values the many BLICK-branded materials. "I'm always using their acrylics, oils, brushes and canvases for the affordability, as well as for quality," she says.

Forrest emphasizes the role that our tools can play in art-making. "Materials matter, but what matters even more is the freedom they give you to explore," she says. "When I have my oils, brushes and surfaces ready, I feel limitless. That sense of possibility is what keeps me showing up at the easel day after day."

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Utrecht

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Bathed in Moonlight

Willard Metcalf's nocturne energized the Lyme Art Colony in the early 20th century.

BY Jerry N. Weiss

By the time Willard Metcalf (American, 1858–1925) first visited Old Lyme, Conn., he was an established artist. He had studied in Boston and Paris, and traveled widely overseas before taking a studio in New York City. At the urging of his friend Childe Hassam, Metcalf went to Old Lyme in the summer of 1905, and returned the following two summers as well. It was during the summer of 1906 that Metcalf experienced two life-changing events—the dissolution of his marriage and the painting of *May Night*. The painting's impact was quite noteworthy. It was the early 20th-century's version of an internet image gone viral.

Nocturnes had become a popular subject for artists in the Lyme Art Colony, especially when rainy weather precluded painting en plein air. Metcalf began *May Night* in the spring and worked on it throughout the summer. In July 1906, Hassam wrote a fellow artist, "Metty is working hard at a moonlight. We are all doing moonlights. The weather has been so bad that we have been forced to it."

The subject of *May Night* is the façade of Florence Griswold's home, now a museum. At the time, the building served as a boarding house for visiting artists, and it was the nucleus of the town's art colony. When Metcalf finished the piece, he presented it to Miss Florence in lieu of payment for room and board. She demurred, saying, "It's the best thing you've ever done. When you show it in New York, they'll snap it up at once, and everything will be lovely."

The following year, *May Night* was purchased by the Corcoran Gallery for $3,000, which would be the equivalent of more than $100,000 today. Metcalf's reputation was elevated to the first rank of American Impressionists, and Old Lyme's prominence as an artists' colony was affirmed.

May Night
(1906; oil on canvas, $39\frac{3}{16}$x$36\frac{1}{8}$)
by Willard Metcalf
NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART, CORCORAN COLLECTION (MUSEUM PURCHASE, GALLERY FUND), 2014.136.6

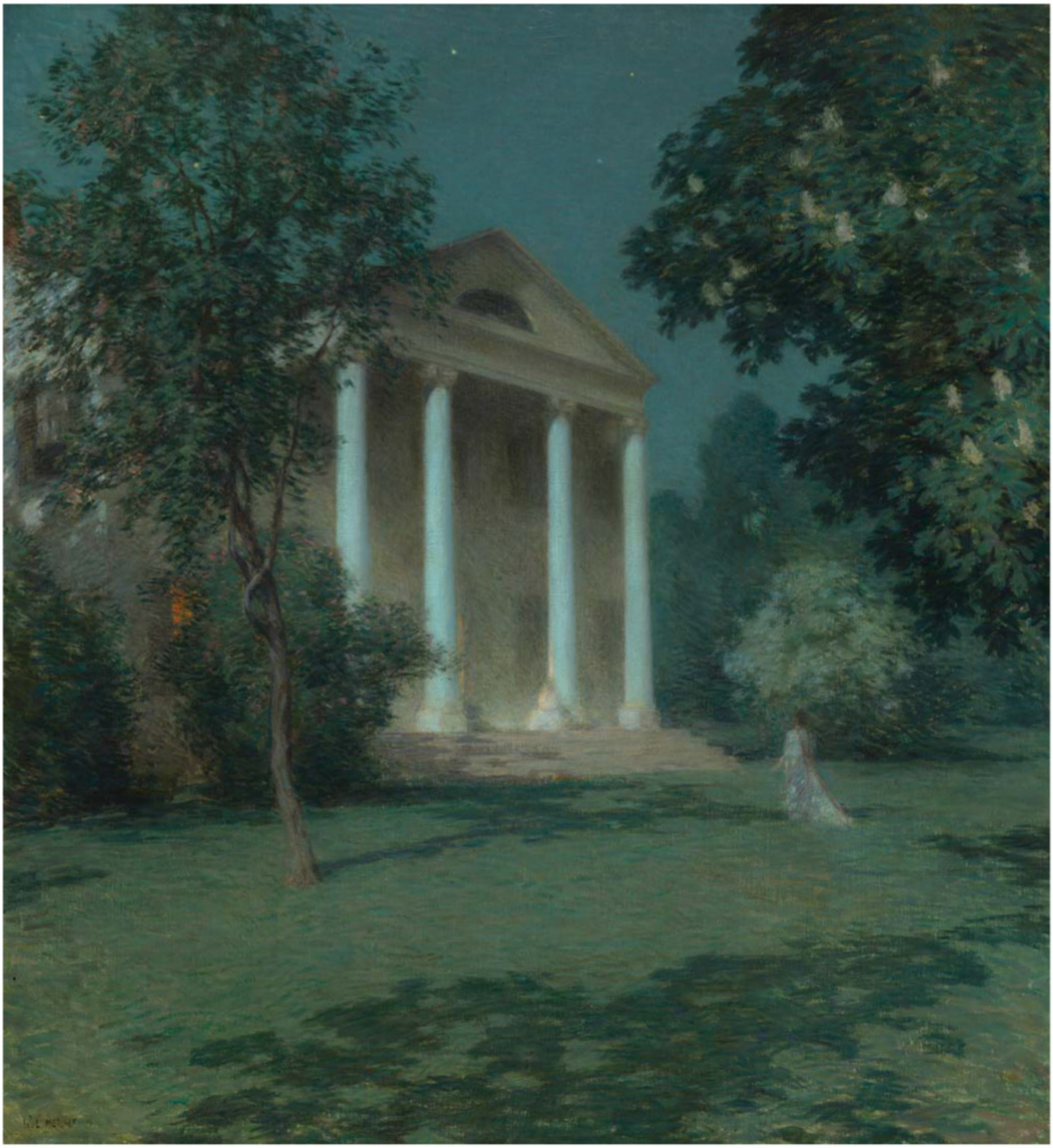
Jerry N. Weiss is a contributing writer to art magazines and teaches at the Art Students League of New York.

Foreground shadows cast by trees lead us into the scene. Flanked by more trees at the center of the composition is the portico of Florence Griswold's home, softened in the glow of moonlight. One woman sits on the building's steps, another—said to be Miss Florence—crosses the lawn toward her. The house, now filled with paintings by the artists who stayed there, faces onto Lyme Street.

The painting's dominant color note is the blue of the night sky, which saturates grass, foliage and even the house's white columns. Though the tonal harmonies of a nocturne present the challenge of a limited color range, *May Night* is by no means monochromatic. As a counterpoint, Metcalf introduced warm lamplight from inside the house that reaches out to the lawn, its grass flecked with small orange brushstrokes.

The critical response to *May Night* was enthusiastic. Metcalf's colleague Philip Leslie Hale wrote of the painting, "One could hardly get a stronger sense of the beauty and mystery of night and springtime … all changed to something new and strange by the magic of dim-reflected light of the moon."

Metcalf's Old Lyme landscapes sold quickly. Other artists flocked to the area in hopes of emulating his success, some even painting nocturnes of Miss Florence's home. A journalist wryly noted, "Never before has there been such a sudden demand for every inch of available space as there is this year … Lyme cows are so busy posing for the art classes that they have hardly time to be milked."



“We are all doing moonlights.” —CHILDE HASSAM

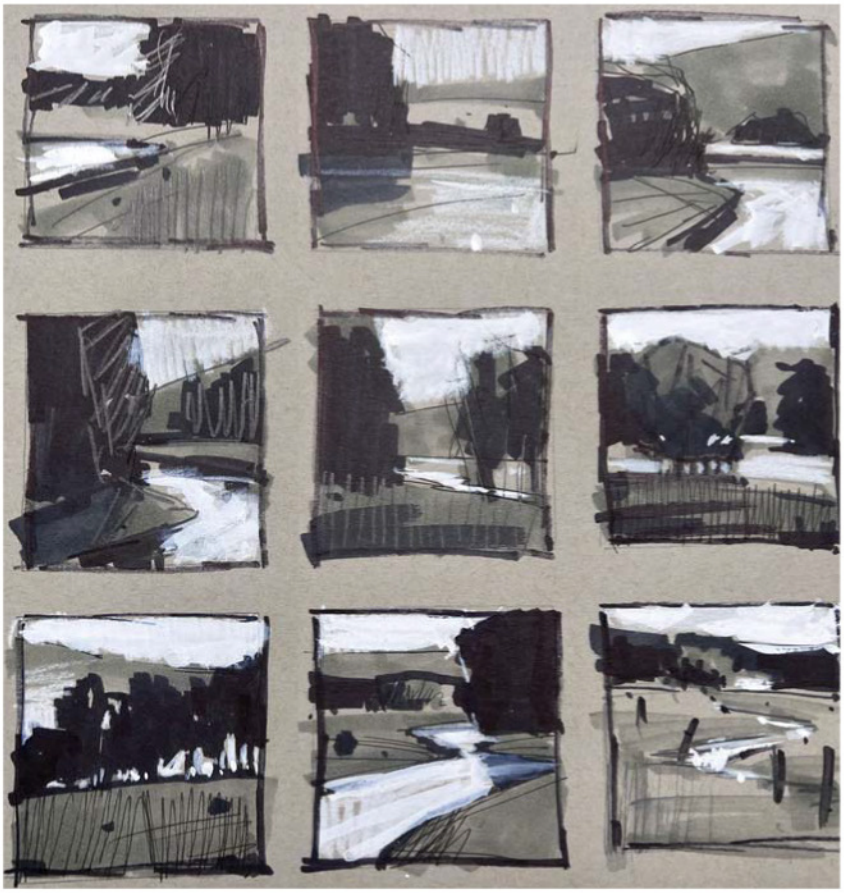
Mighty Minis

Sink your teeth into four creative practices for making bite-sized art.

By Marla Baggetta

I've always believed that with just a pen, a scrap of paper and a few spare minutes, I can keep my creative muscles in shape. You can,too. The secret is working small. It lets us see the overall value structure before details take over; spend pennies instead of dollars on materials; stay portable; and build up brush (or pencil) miles fast. Miniature painting has deep roots—from illuminated manuscripts and Mughal Empire court art to the pocket-sized royal portraits of Nicholas Hilliard (English, 1547–1619). In other words, we're in good company, as working tiny has a long and distinguished history.

For this challenge, I've designed four exercises featuring bite-sized works, each built on a grid of nine studies. (Think trading-card scale—roughly 2×3 inches or even smaller). Do one grid a week, or binge them over a long weekend. Either way, you'll finish with 36 fresh ideas and a sharper eye—plenty to get you hooked on working small.



EXERCISE 1
VALUE THUMBNAILS

Grab a 9x12-inch sketchbook, a pencil, markers, pens and a white colored pencil.

1. Box it in. Draw a grid of squares, each 2x2 inches. Making them small means you won't be able to fuss over your work.

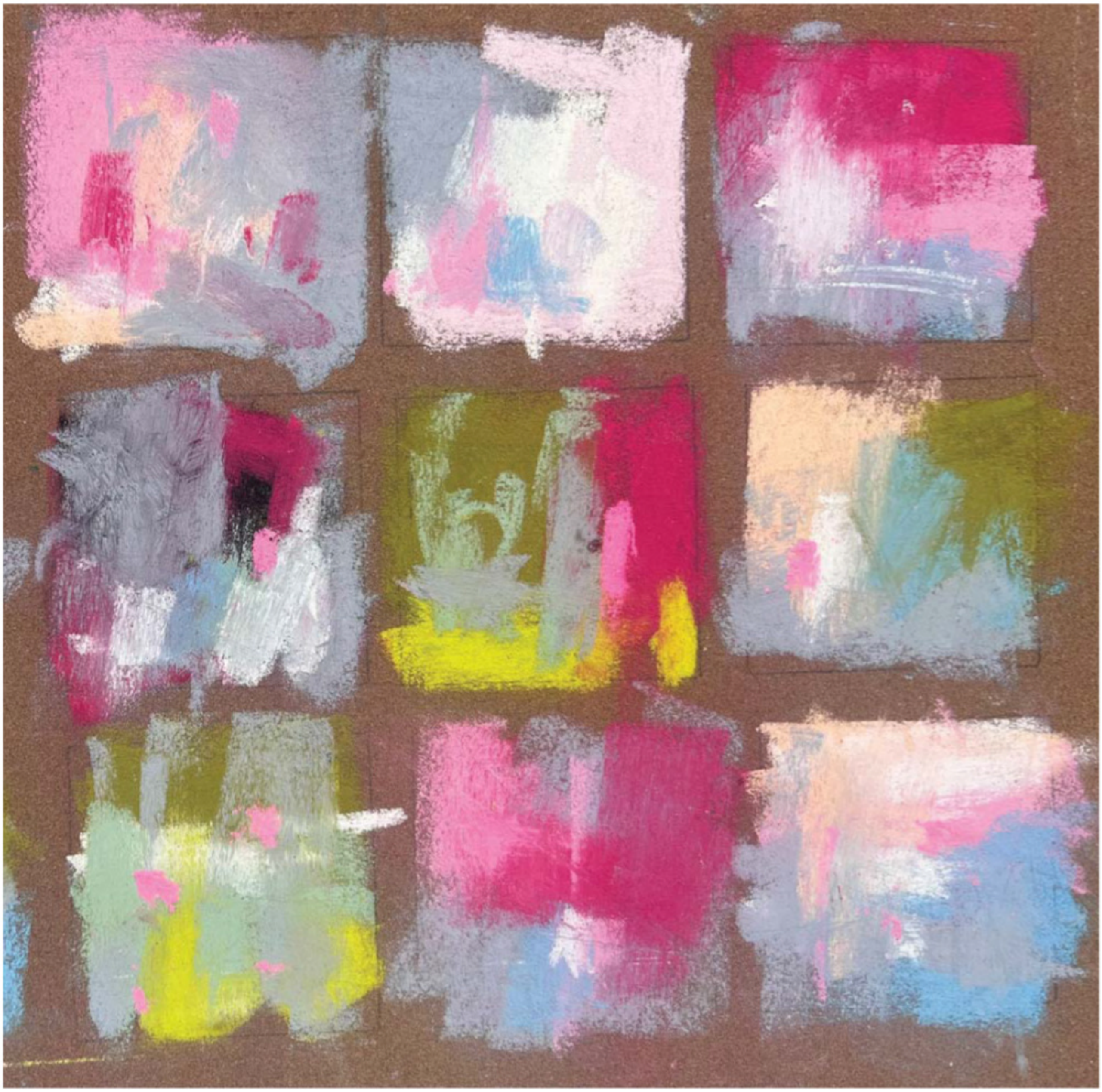
2. Squint and simplify. Choose a few landscape photos as reference. Squint until each "collapses" into three to five major shapes.

3. Mass the darks. Use broad hatching marks to block in the darkest shapes. Create gradations with the ball point pen for the mid-tones. Add white pencil marks or for the lightest lights.

4. Crop, edit and invent. Explore different croppings to go beyond the most obvious of compositions.

5. Compare. Pin up your work. Which compositions "read" from across the room? Circle your favorite to consider as a future painting.

Why it matters: Stripping away color exposes the skeleton of design—shape and value. The thumbnails reveal what's working before you consider painting.



EXERCISE 2
COLOR BITES

Create a grid of nine 2x2-inch squares on a 9×12 inch sheet of toned, sanded paper. Grab your favorite pastel sticks, plus one wild card. Repeat with another grouping of sticks as many times as possible.

1. **Set up a harmony.** Pick a dominant temperature (say, warm yellow) and its complement.

2. **Limit the colors.** Try to keep it to five sticks, six at the most.

3. **Create a hierarchy.** In each new square, let a different stick lead the dance.

4. **Think abstractly.** Don't limit yourself by thinking about a subject. It's better to consider geometric or organic shapes instead of landscape or still-life scenes.

5. **Do a photo test.** Snap a photo in grayscale mode. Do the color combos still read? Note any surprises to keep in mind if planning larger works.

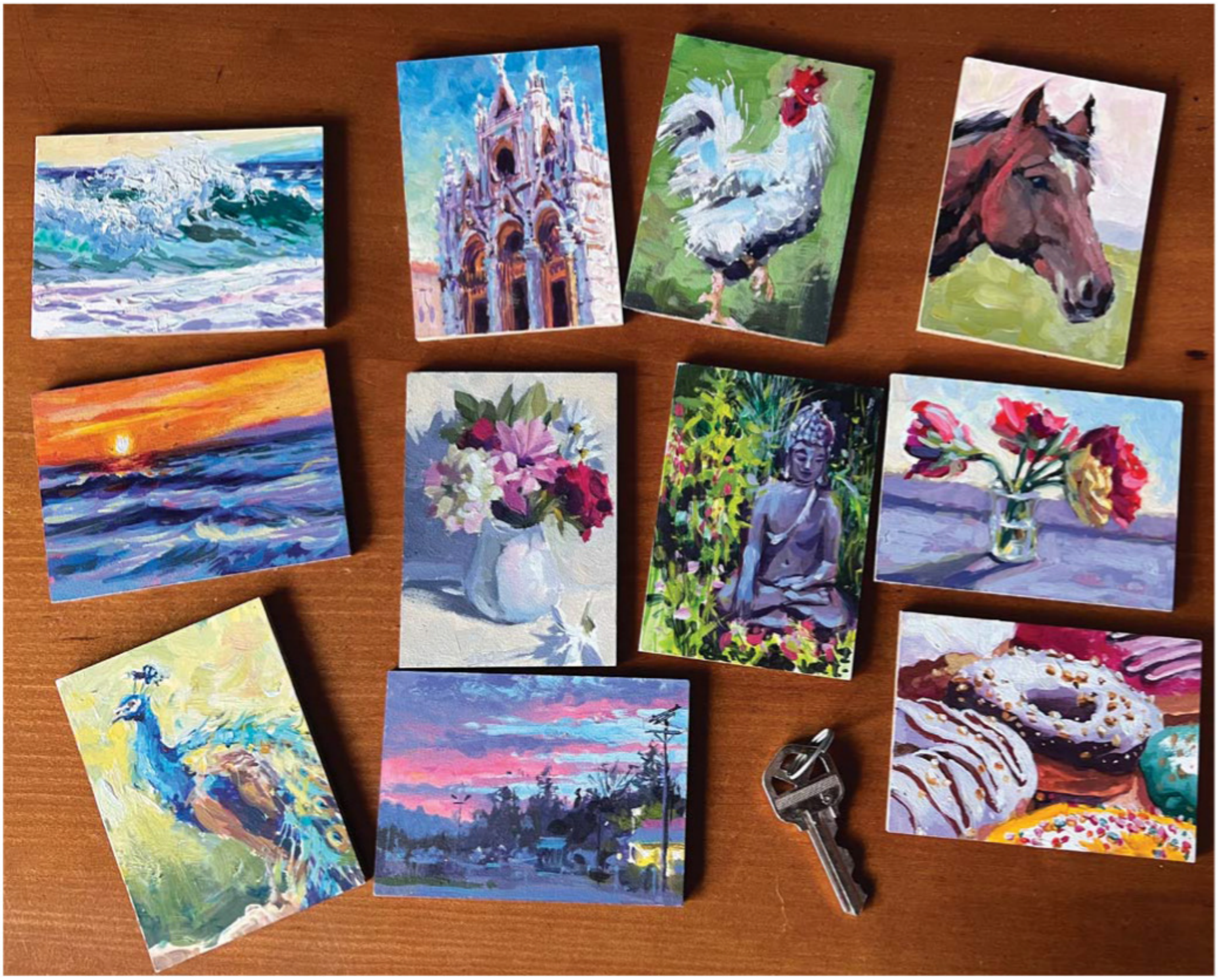
Why it matters: Pastel's immediacy ensures that color decisions are intuitive. A nine-pack of abstractions gives you a ready library of harmonies for future landscapes or florals.

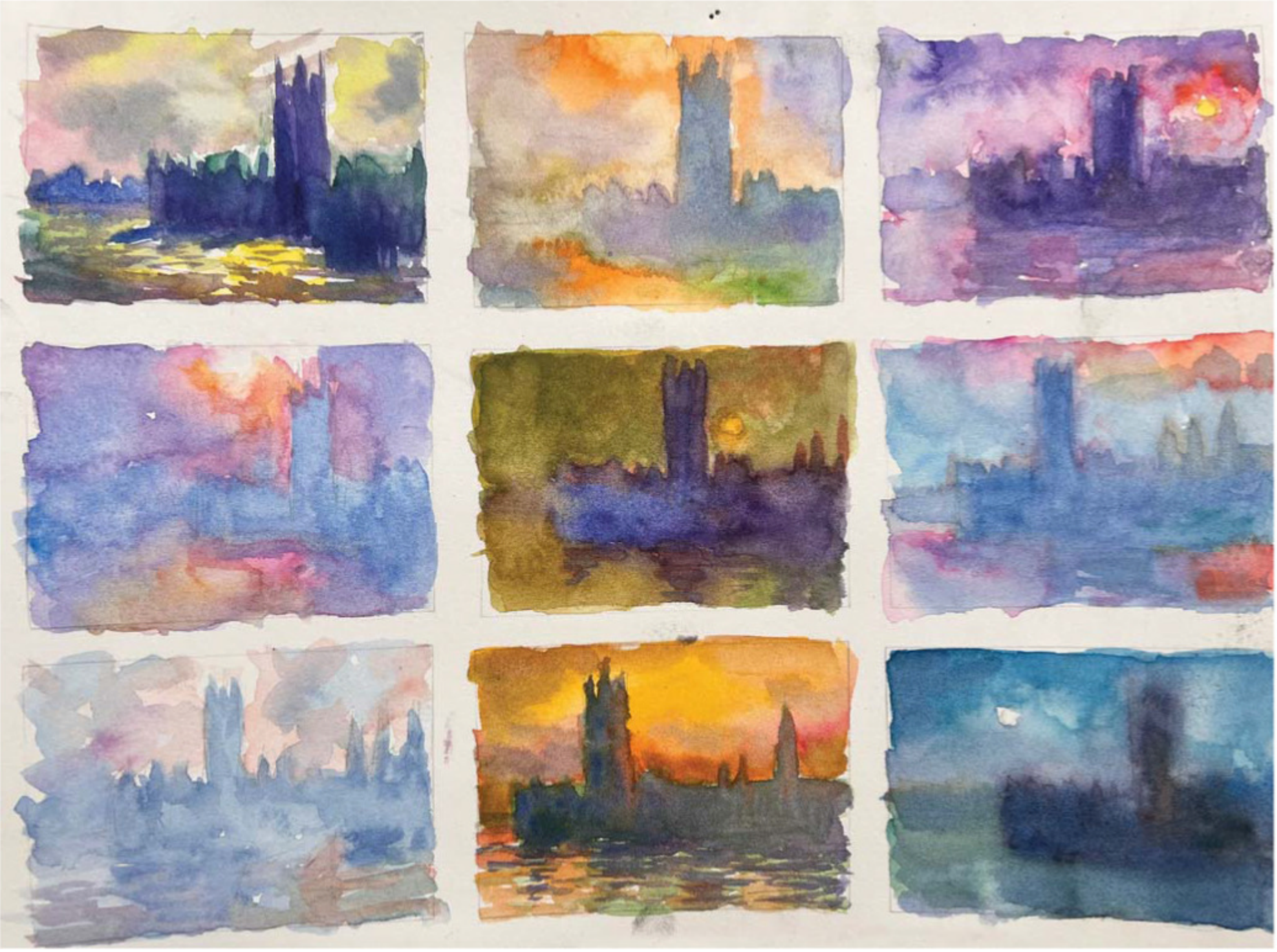
EXERCISE 3
ACRYLIC TIDBITS

Select nine subjects you've been itching to try—still lifes, cloud studies, landscapes, birds or whimsical portraits. I used 3½x2½-inch Ampersand Clayboard (a sturdy multimedia paper would also work well) and some acrylic paints. I couldn't quite help myself and made 11 miniature paintings!

1. **Sketch it in.** Use a pencil or a light painted line to capture the composition.
2. **Create layers.** Capture the big shapes with paint.
3. **Add a second layer.** Create just a suggestion of detail with some texture and thicker paint.
4. **Add fun finishing touches.** Surprisingly, you can add more details than you might consider possible at this size. Those few final flourishes contribute to a sense of completion.

Why it matters: Acrylic dries fast, so this exercise forces you to be more decisive. In addition, nine different subjects expand your repertoire, increase painting mileage and manifest possibilities for previously unexplored subjects.





EXERCISE 4
MINI MASTERPIECES

Grab a sheet of 140-lb. cold-pressed watercolor paper, a small set of watercolors, a No. 6 round brush and a pencil. Divide the sheet into small squares or rectangles.

1. Gather your faves. Gather some photos or postcards of a favorite prolific painter whose work you admire—bonus points for atmospheric light. (I've chosen Monet as my muse.)

2. Start light. Use a very light pencil line to establish the large shapes on the small area for each piece you're copying.

3. Capture the moment. What do you love most about each mini work? The color? The composition? The values?

4. Keep your appreciation and fascination high. Quiet your perfectionist voice as you work; just go with the flow.

Why it matters: Copying a master in miniature forces you to distill essence, not replicate brushwork. Nine atmospheric versions train your color memory and, in my examples, pay homage to a titan of light. When you're done with the first set, try another with a focus on depicting different times of day and a range of atmospheric effects.

WRAPPING UP

By the time you've finished, you'll have created 36 mini artworks—a pocket gallery of compositional, color and atmospheric ideas. Cut them to size and pin them to your studio wall, shuffle them like playing cards or gift a favorite to a friend. Most importantly, though, you'll have internalized a creative practice I rely on daily: When the surface is extra small, there's always time to make art.

Marla Baggetta has been a professional artist and instructor for more than 30 years. Known for her expressive pastels, she has conducted workshops across the globe, sharing her passion for color and light. Her popular online learning platform, PaintingLessonsWithMarla.com, reaches artists worldwide with its comprehensive courses and tutorials. She's a Signature Member of the Pastel Society of America and a Master Circle recipient of the International Association of Pastel Societies.

WE ASKED...

How do you decide when a work of art is finished?

“When you’ve lost interest and patience with a piece, that’s when it’s done.”

CHIEN CHUNG WEI
ARTIST

“I’m finished with a painting when the work elicits the same feeling inside me that I get when looking at my subject.”

JULIETTE ARISTIDES
ARTIST

“You know a work is finished when there’s nothing else you can add that will further its feeling. This realization can happen at any stage. A sketch can be deemed a complete and noble work of art just as easily as a more polished studio piece. At some point, the artist must step back and say, ‘There. I’ve said it.’”

MARY WHYTE
ARTIST

“A PAINTING IS FINISHED WHEN THE ARTIST SAYS IT IS FINISHED.”

—REMBRANDT

WE ASKED...

YOU ANSWERED

“A painting feels finished when there’s nothing left to solve, and I realize I’m just moving paint around and it’s not adding anything more.”

—JEFF DILLON

“It’s intuitive. It’s that moment when it feels right in my gut. If I have to ask myself or anyone else if it’s finished, it’s not.”

—LINDA WOOTERS

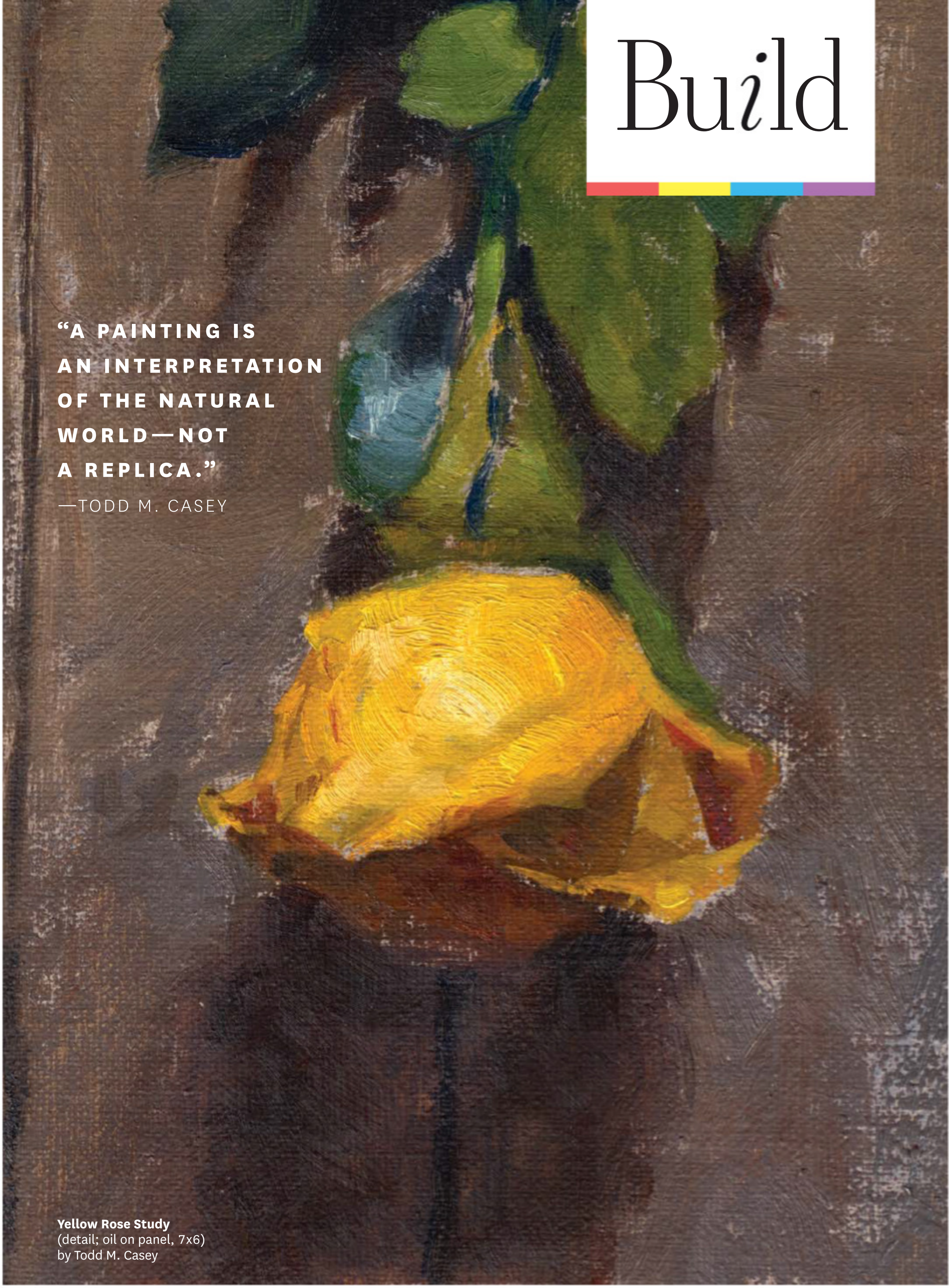
“I leave it alone for a while and then come back and look at it with fresh eyes. I also hold it up to a mirror and look at it backward.”

—GEORGINA VAN ZANDT

“I’ve come to know my artwork is finished when I slow to a turtle’s pace in the creative process and that very first ‘Is this complete?’ question crosses my mind. That’s the signal to put away the brush.” —VICKI CLARKSON

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK AND INSTAGRAM TO ANSWER QUESTIONS FOR “THE ASK.” RESPONSES MAY BE EDITED FOR LENGTH AND CLARITY.

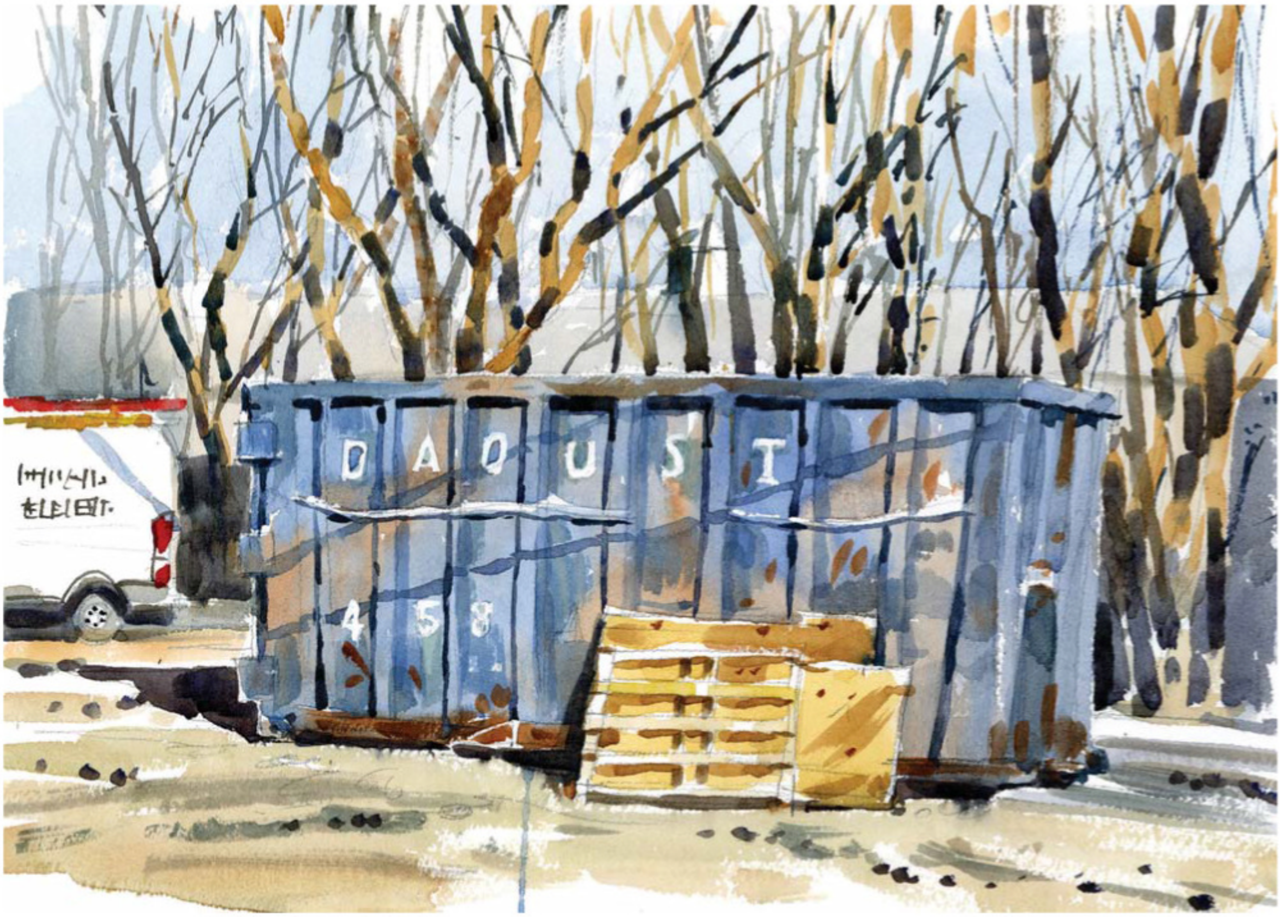
Build



"A PAINTING IS AN INTERPRETATION OF THE NATURAL WORLD—NOT A REPLICA."

—TODD M. CASEY

Yellow Rose Study
(detail; oil on panel, 7x6)
by Todd M. Casey



Finding Winter

Discover the variety of color and shape in cold-weather scenes.

BY Shari Blaukopf

For a plein air painter like myself, finding subjects during spring, summer and fall is pretty easy, as each season is decked out in its own bright colors and specific light. But winter, at least in my part of the world—Montreal, Canada—is decidedly more of a challenge. From November through April, the air is cold, and daylight is short. Still, that's never stopped me from heading out and finding scenes that are every bit as arresting as those in the gentler months.

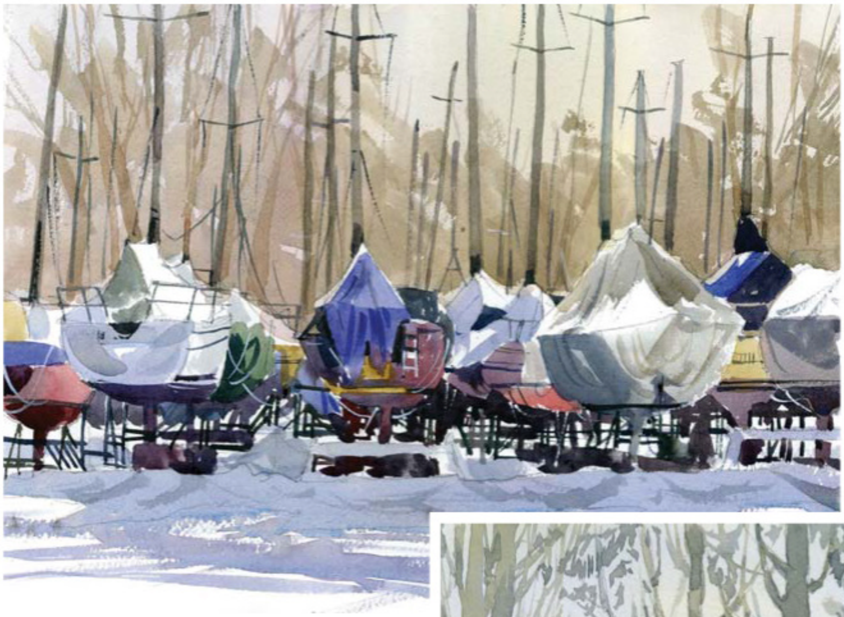
Since I do my winter "plein air" sketching from the comfort of my car, I drive around for a bit, hunting up subjects. I know what to look for. Sunny outside? I'll build my compositions around shadows on snow. Cloudy today? I'll search for a spot of color, a bold contrast or juxtaposed shapes—say, rusty wheelbarrows, an isolated cabin, or boats wrapped up and in drydock.

Look carefully, and you'll see that ordinary objects take on heightened drama in winter, for they seem to be fast asleep under their snowy cloaks, perhaps dreaming of spring. Here's some advice for finding scenes to sketch and paint—even on the shortest, coldest days of the year.

SEEK OUT SPOTS OF COLOR AMONG THE GRAY.

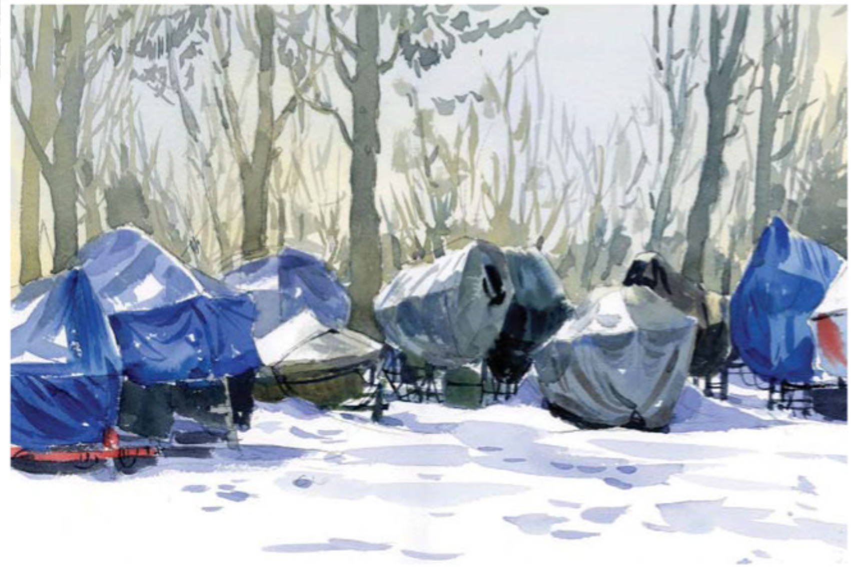
For someone who loves color, the hardest time of year is early winter, when the trees are bare and the first snow has yet to fall. It can be endlessly gray. Given this reality, I look for subjects with a strong local color. If the subject is rusty, even better! This messy juxtaposition of blue construction dumpster and wooden pallet fits the bill. And, as it was a sunny day, the lively play of shadows was especially fun and satisfying to paint.

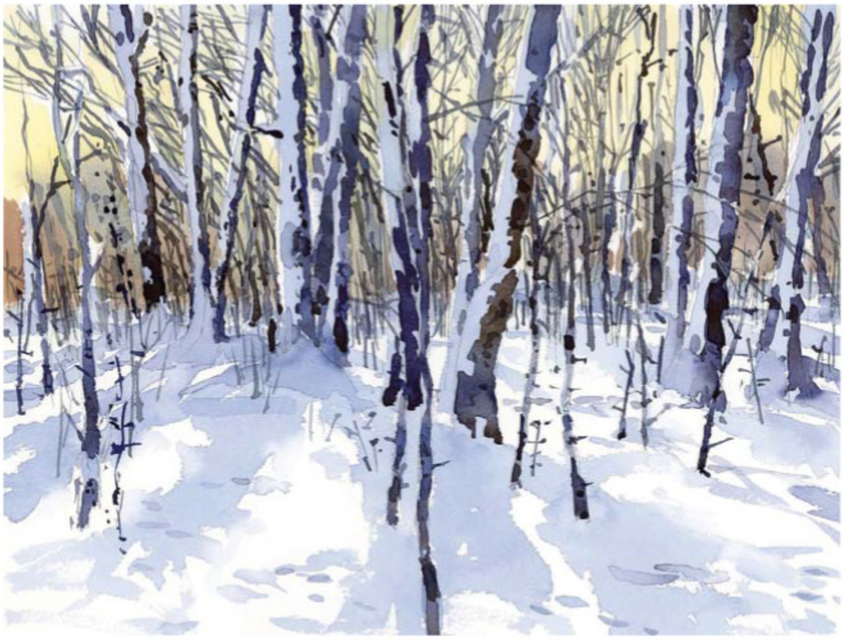
Shari Blaukopf (shariblaukopf.com) is a Signature Member of the American Watercolor Society and the Canadian Society of Painters in Water Colour. You can find her online courses at Learn.ShariBlaukopf.com. Her book, The Urban Sketching Handbook: Working With Color, *is available in bookstores and at online retailers everywhere.*



REVISIT FAVORITE SUMMER SCENES.

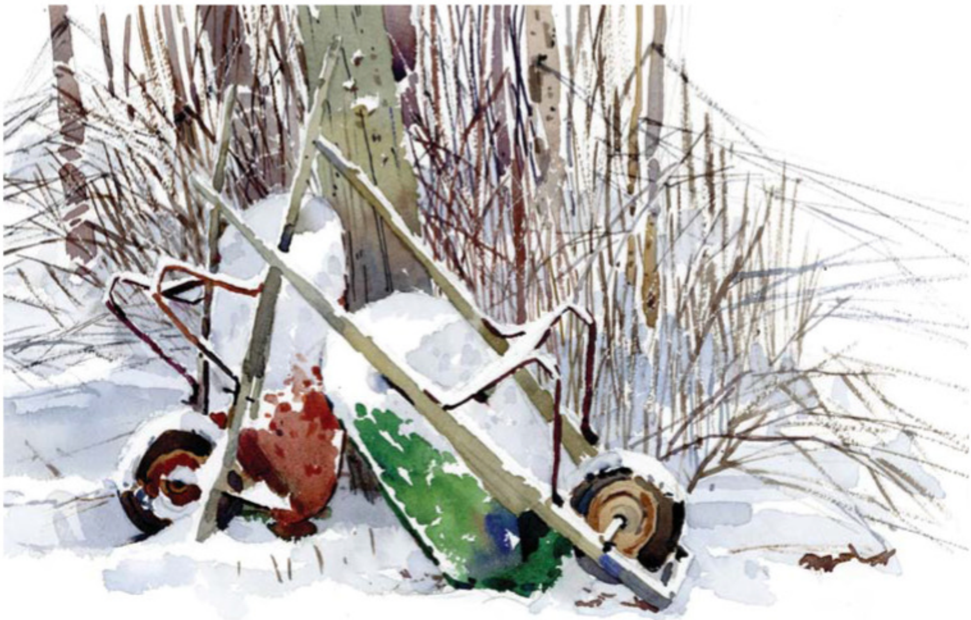
I love painting boats at yacht clubs and marinas in the summer, and return to the same sites to paint the very same boats at drydock in winter. I was delighted by the evocative shapes, colors and patterns on display—tarps flapping in the wind, exposed hulls and keels, upright masts, and clanking rigging. Against a backdrop of bare trees, it's like a big slumber party.





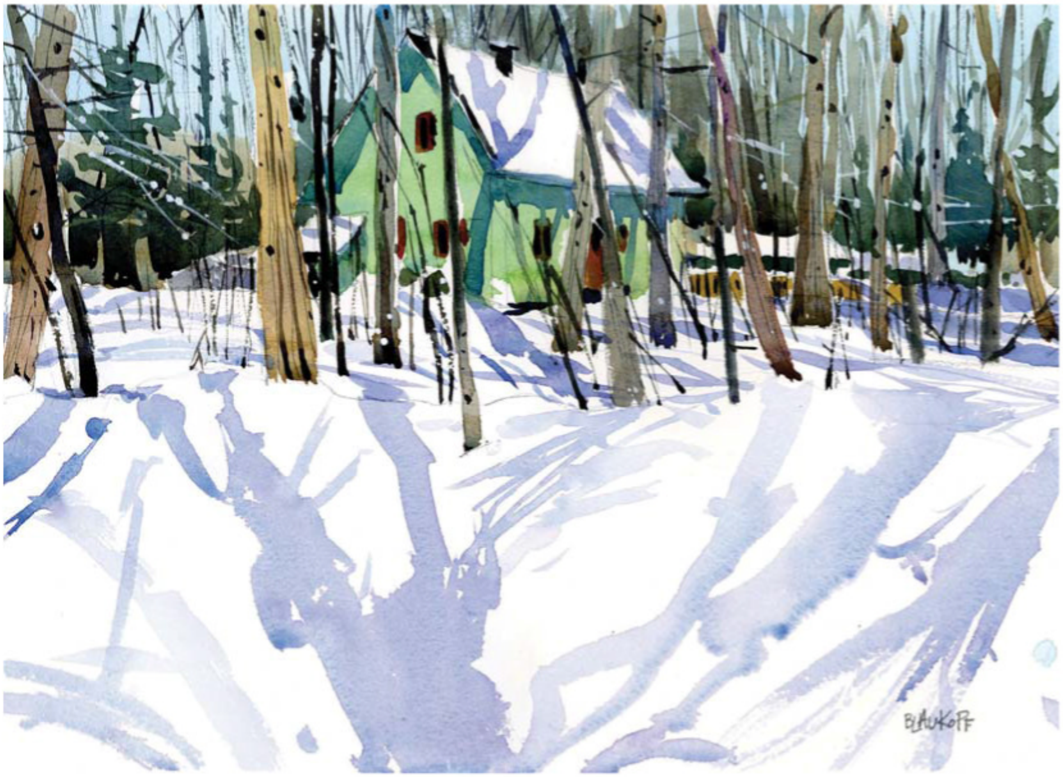
CAPTURE THE MOMENT.

One advantage to painting in winter is that the best light arrives earlier in the day. In fact, in December and January, it's dark by 4 p.m. This gives me a narrow but convenient window of time, when the setting sun and slanting light transform a little patch of woods into a glowing fantasy. I have just enough time to capture the warm yellow sky and lengthening blue shadows on snow.



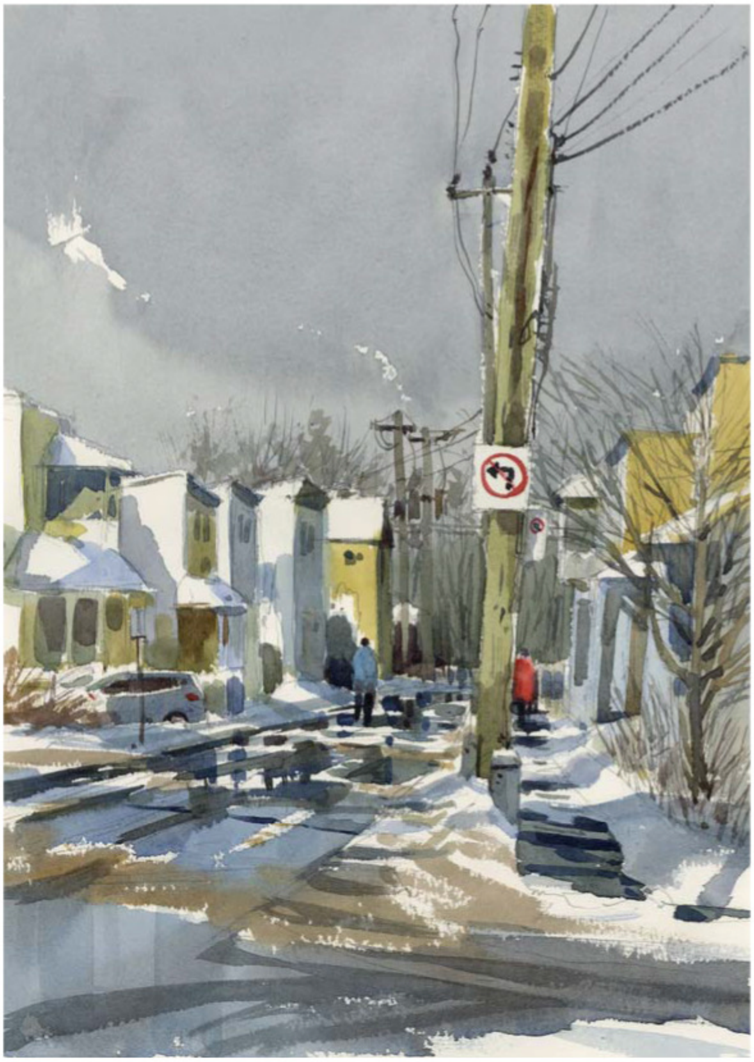
LOOK FOR COMPLEMENTARY COLORS.

Although it's long retired from heavy lifting, my rusty red wheelbarrow has sat patiently for its portrait over many years. I recently inherited a rusty green one, too. Thanks to their complementary colors, this pair is especially handsome in the winter, creating a focal point visible from my kitchen window. In summer, they blend in with the surrounding woods and leafy shadows. In winter, a light dusting of snow defines their shapes and gives them a stark clarity.



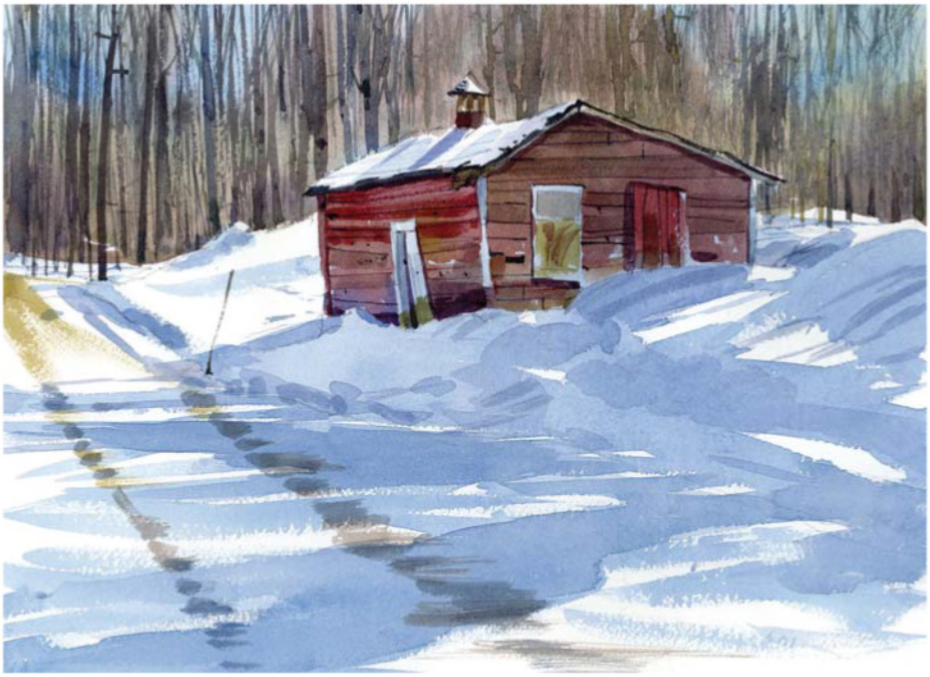
SEE WHAT YOU'RE MISSING.

During the winter, I spend a lot of time walking through the neighborhood with my dog. At this slow pace, with lots of sniffing (hers!) along the way, I see things I wouldn't ordinarily notice. One is this little green house, which is always hidden in summer. On a recent walk on a sunny day, it became a little emerald beacon in the woods. I especially enjoyed capturing the tree shadows that patterned the foreground snow and traveled up and across the house.



FOCUS ON THE MELTING SNOW.

Although my neighborhood looks magical right after a fresh snowfall, a warm winter day brings its own charm. Here, the melting snow has created giant puddles on a village road. Although the puddles aren't too much fun for pedestrians, their reflections are fun to paint. Surrounded by patches of white and reflecting the deep-blue winter sky, there's plenty of opportunity to play in these puddles with subtly layered, saturated colors.



TRANSFORM SHADOWS INTO DESIGN ELEMENTS.

On sunny days, I typically focus on snow shadows. A favorite mix for shadows begins with cerulean blue, to which I add a bit of carbazole violet and just a touch of raw sienna to neutralize the purple. I mix a generous puddle and then paint with a big brush. As the paint dries, I drag my brush over the white of the paper to convey the textured edges of snowdrifts. The horizontal movement of these shadows makes a striking contrast to the vertical wall of trees in the background.

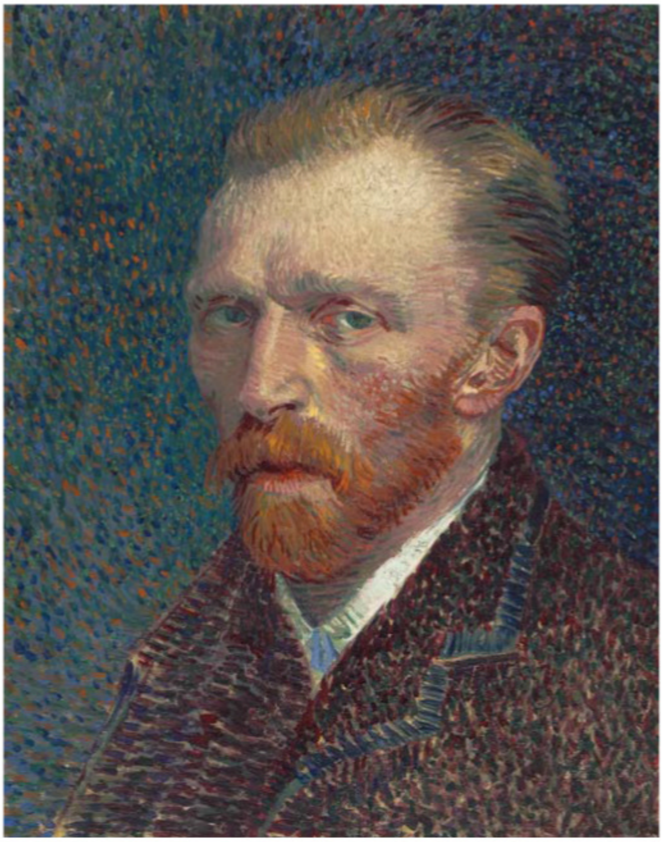
Get Criminal With Color

Use these techniques to get your painting values right so you can be more expressive with color.

By Todd M. Casey

When studying in an atelier or academy, students must first learn to draw. Drawing provides the structure for all forms—the language for all representational art. After a student masters drawing, which can take years, the next step is to model (or render) form in black and white. This is typically done in pencil or charcoal and starts with drawing from antique casts. It then progresses into monochromatic paintings (grisailles) and then into color.

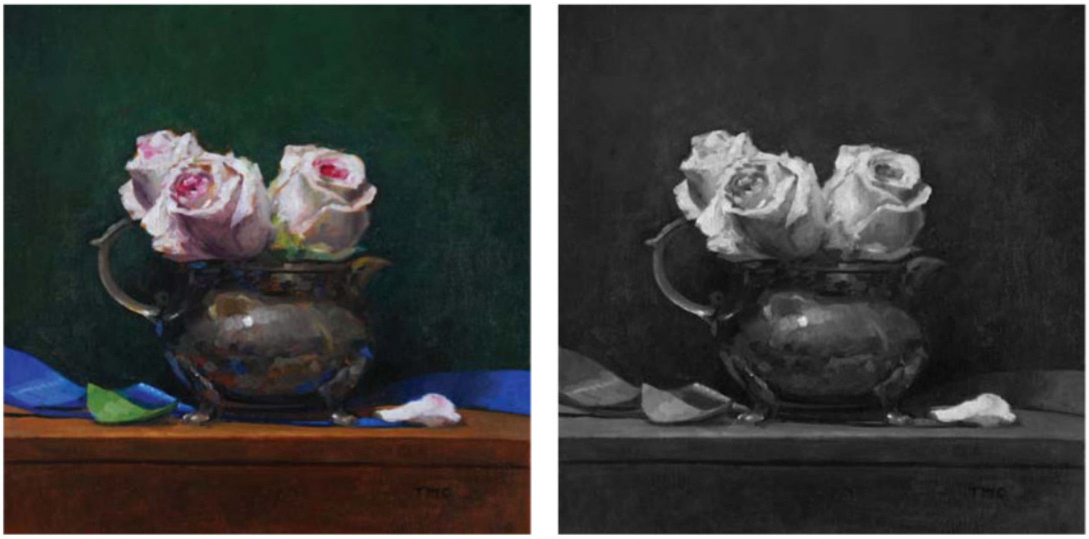
If you were to convert a colored photo to black-and-white, you'd see the value within each color. All representational painting hangs on a mastery and deep understanding of values. Color is usually slowly introduced, sometimes in the form of a color string. A color string is a progression of color from light to dark in the approximate hue angle (a dark to light red, for example). A progression of color is similar to a value scale. When a student begins to master going up and down a color scale, like a value scale, they can then move on to expression.



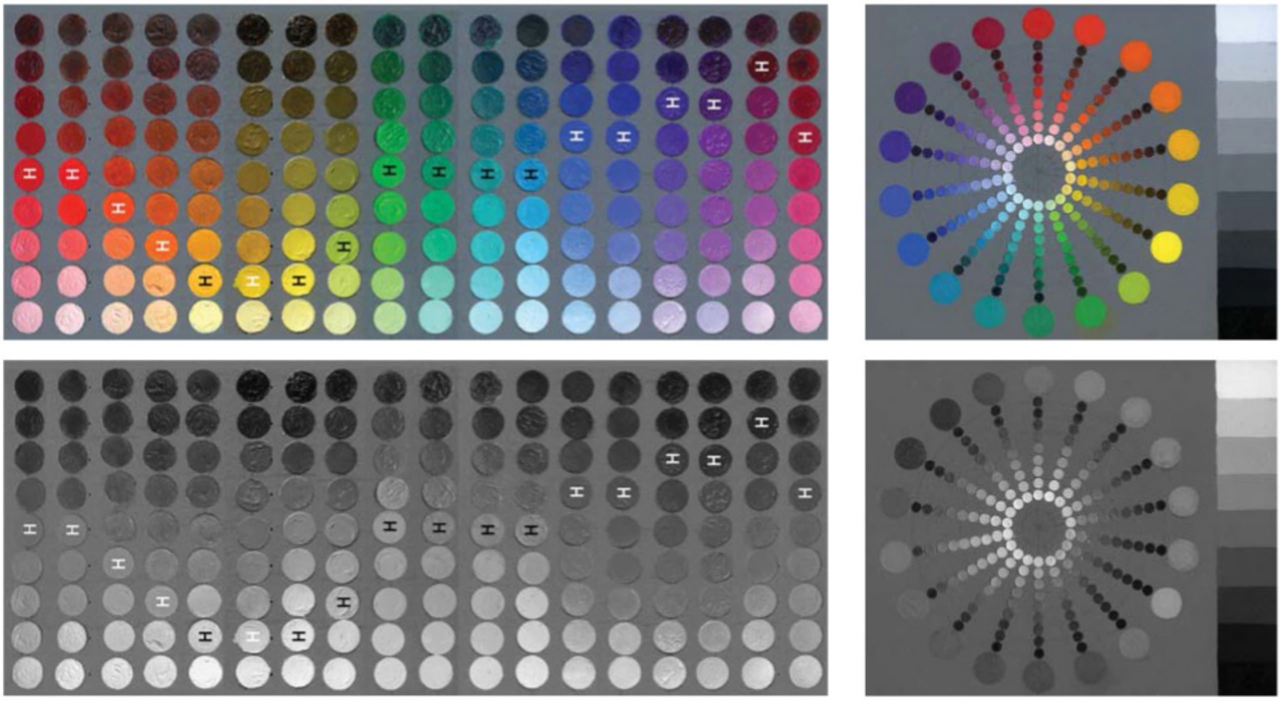
Van Gogh was very expressive with his colors, often creating a vibrating effect with the pigments, as seen in **Vincent van Gogh, Self Portrait** (1887; oil on artist's board, mounted on cradled panel, 16⅛x12¹³⁄₁₆ inches)

THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO. JOSEPH WINTERBOTHAM COLLECTION. 1954.326

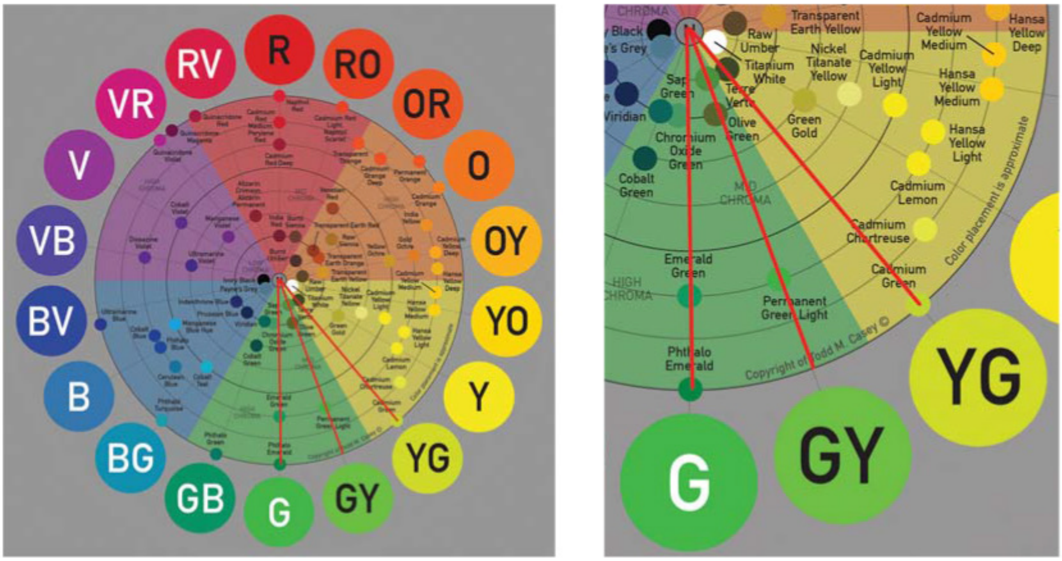
> "Normality is a paved road; it's comfortable to walk, but no flowers grow on it." —VINCENT VAN GOGH



When an image is converted to black and white, as seen here with **White Roses in a Vessel** (oil on panel, 12x12), you can get a clear sense of its value structure and the way that color is intertwined with value.



In this series of tonal progressions in color (top), along with the same image converted to black and white (bottom), notice how each color string is also a value scale from light to dark.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Nickel Titanate Yellow
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Viridian
Chromium Oxide Green
Cobalt Green
Green Gold
Cadmium Yellow Medium
Cadmium Yellow Light
Hansa Yellow Deep
Hansa Yellow Medium
Hansa Yellow Light
Cadmium Lemon
Cadmium Chartreuse
Cadmium Green
Emerald Green
Permanent Green Light
Phthalo Emerald
HIGH CHROMA
MID CHROMA
Color placement is approximate
Copyright of Todd M. Casey ©

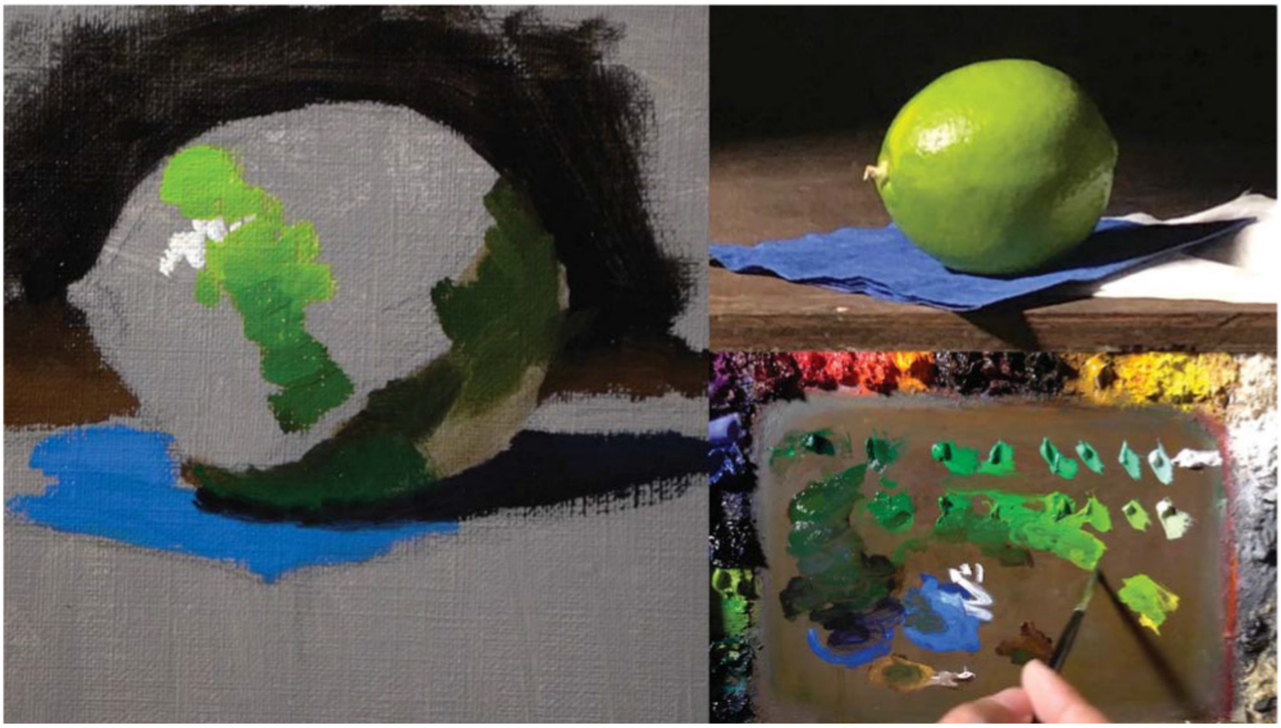
Finding the approximate range of colors that can be used to model a form is the first step. Keep in mind, this doesn't have to be perfect; this is art.

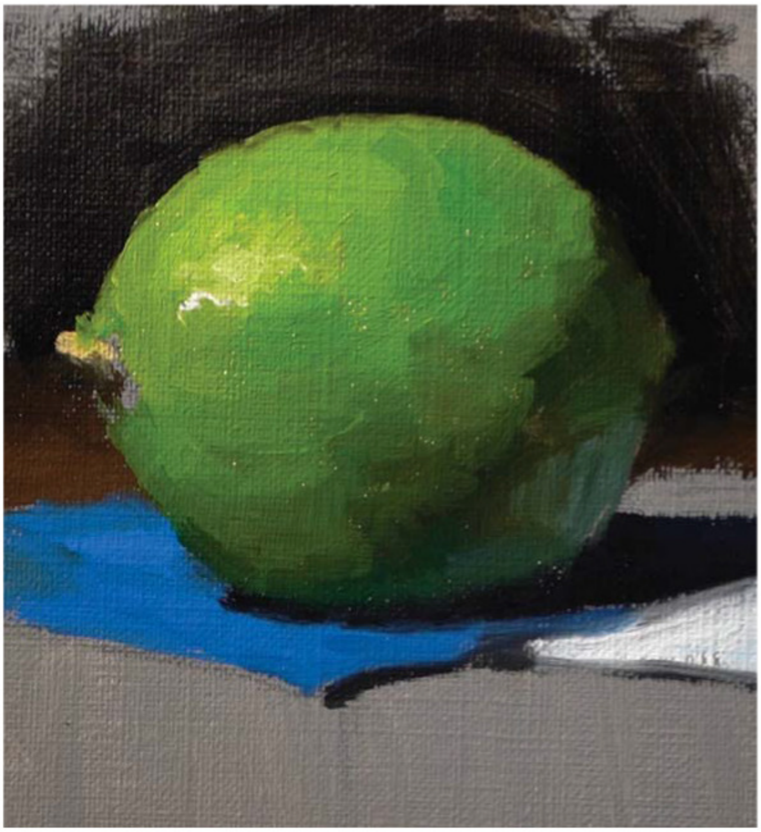
CONTROLLED PAINTING

One of the best ways to master the color scale is through controlled painting, which basically means premixing strings in the correct hue angle to make a tonal progression. The tonal progression is then wrapped onto the form, modeling from the light-most facing plane to the shadow.

The further we move from making a mere copy of a photo, the more we interpret what we see, and the more we heighten expression. The painting becomes based on a true story, and a piece of ourselves gets mixed into it, like alchemy. I always say, *If you nail your values, you can commit crimes with color.*

Each artist gets to determine the extent of expression, but it should grow out of the original vision at the painting's onset. This allows you to control first, then play with a painting's expression.





You can see how I mixed the color strings for this painting (top). This allowed me to go up and down the value scale. Notice how the green color string is wrapped onto the form. In the painting above, each piece of color was added to the form as I progressed toward the light or away from the light, until the form was revealed.

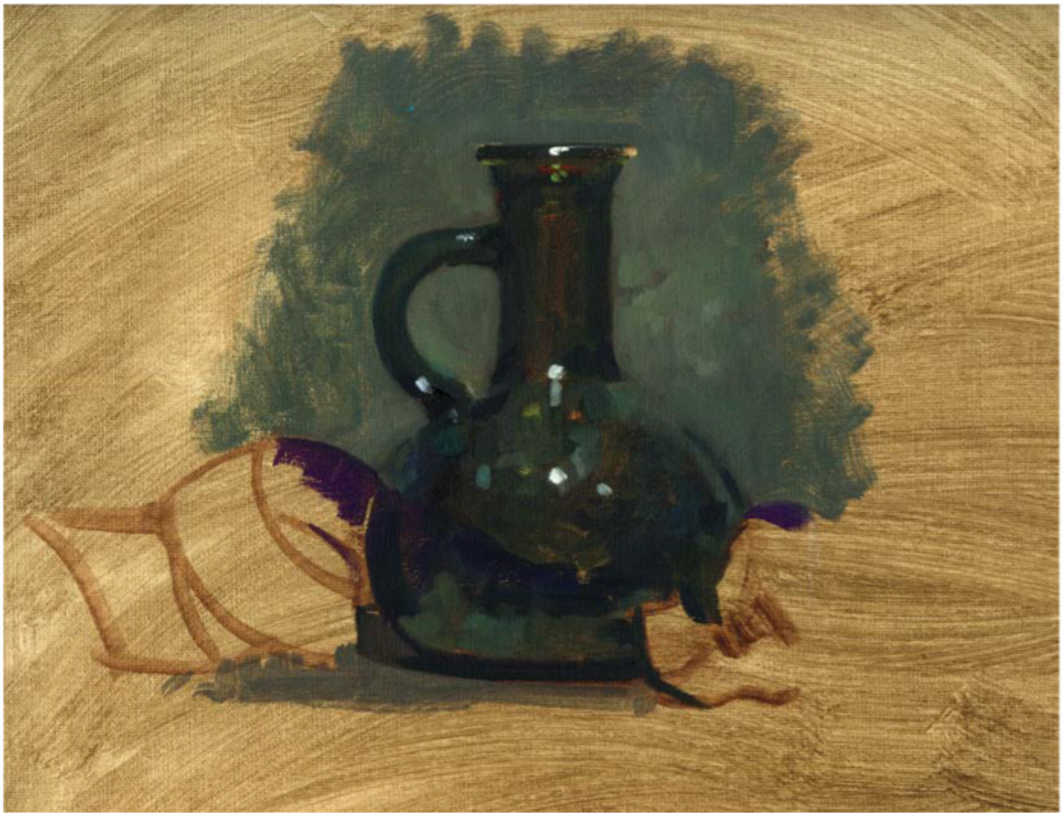
EXPRESSIVE PAINTING

There are many ways to use color to paint expressively. One of the most common is hue shifting. If you get the value correct, you can shift the hue, and it'll still read correctly in the painting. This technique allows you to push expression, making color decisions based on what you want to make others see.

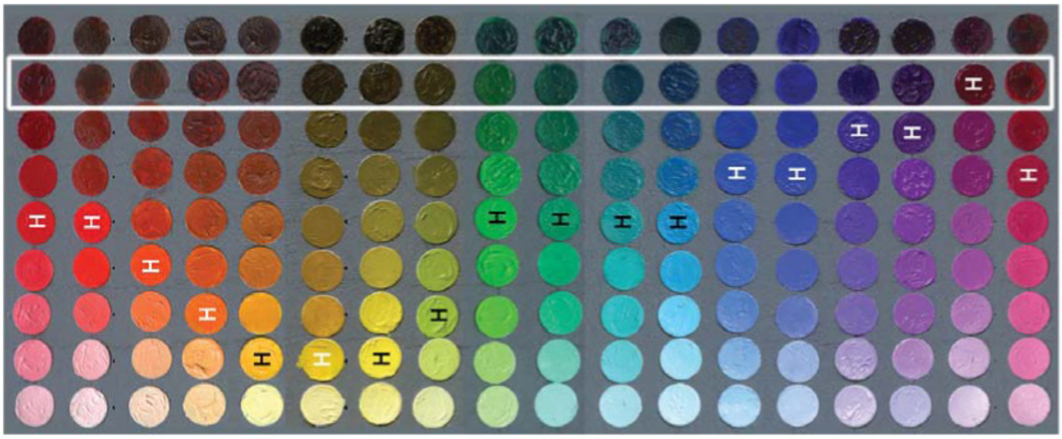
Brush language, or brushwork, is another way to enhance expression in your work by bringing visual poetry to a painting. This can be done with a larger brush than you would normally use, or perhaps a stiffer or softer brush.

You can boost expression in a painting by working with a limited palette, as it forces you to be creative when solving problems. For example, if you were to use only colors that wouldn't allow you to get a full gamut of mixtures, you'd have to settle for something close to the target. You'd settle on values that are the closest to the correct hue.

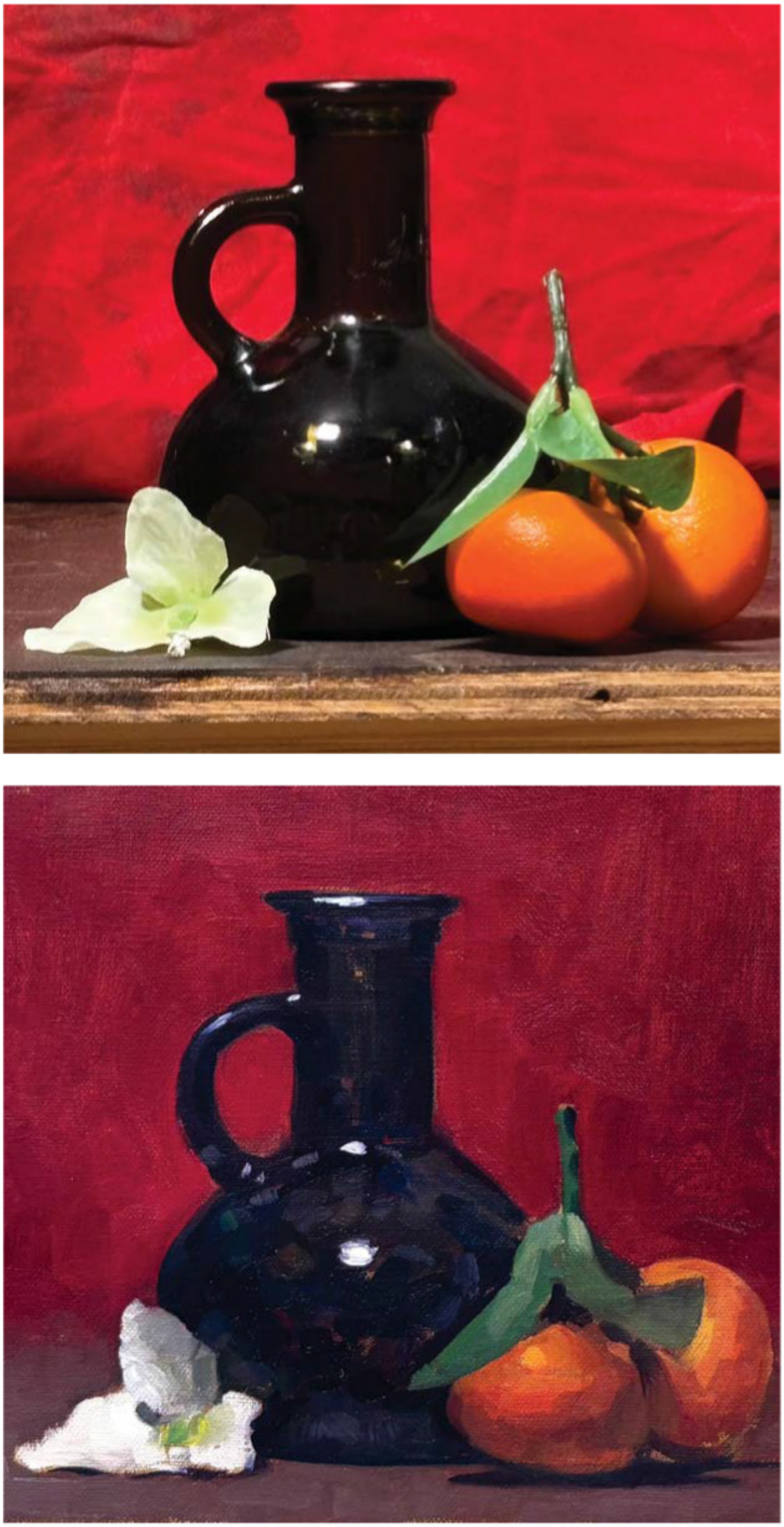
You can also match colors to the value but change the hue, or you can juxtapose two colors next to each other to create an optical mixture, allowing the color to "vibrate," in the manner of the Impressionists.



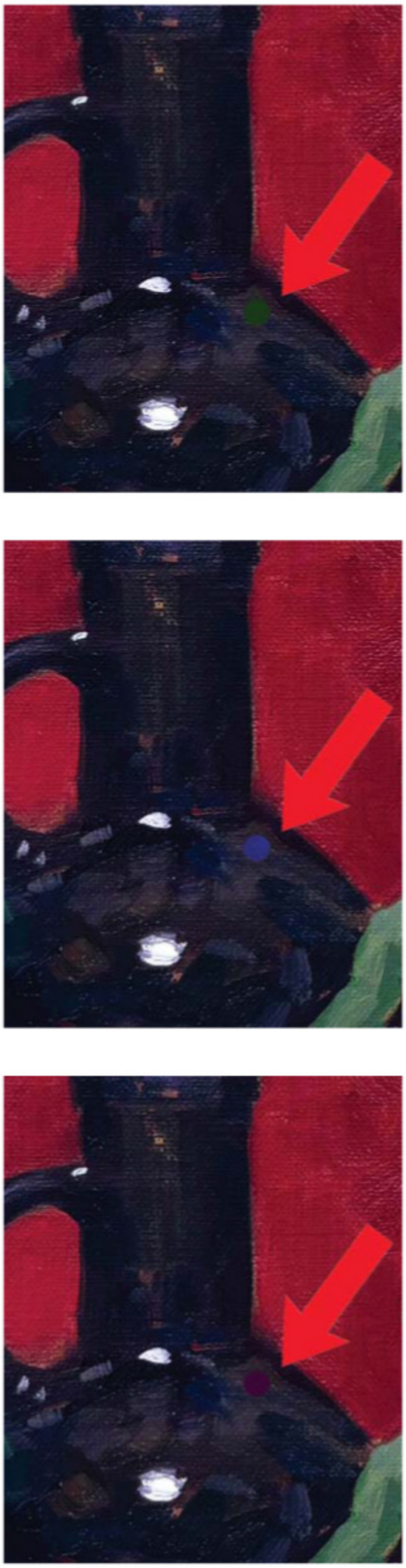
In this quick sketch, I kept the marks loose and playful and pushed the color slightly. Notice the background is a neutral-ish color rather than a neutral gray.



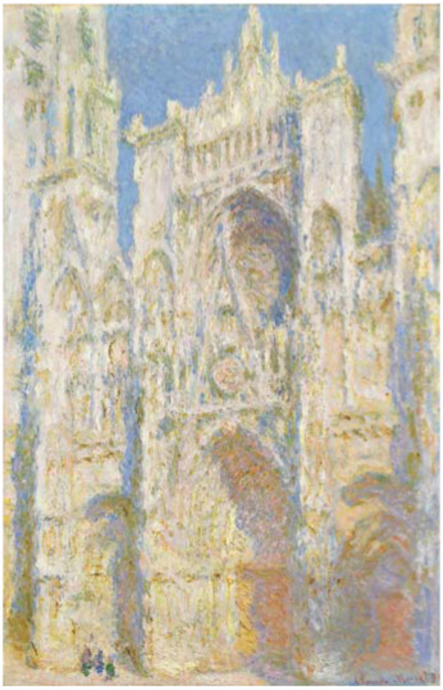
Hue shifting allows an artist to expand color options while maintaining the correct value. See how the row of colors outlined in white offers a variety of color options all within the same value.



The title of **Bottle With Flower and Clementines** (oil on panel, 7x9) relates to the setup (top), but the color decisions and use of a limited palette add personal expression. The bottle is paited a dark purple instead of a dark green, yet it still works. It was done with just phthalo blue, quinacridone magenta, cadmium lemon yellow and titanium white.

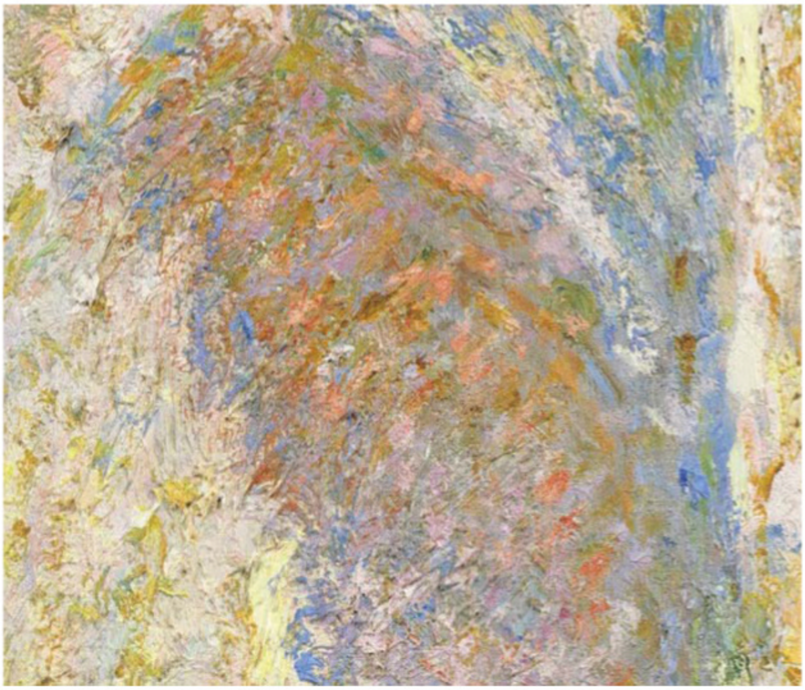


The green, blue and reddish-violet dots on the pitchers above are all the same value, and all possess nearly the same value as their surroundings. This shows you can put any color in that spot if the value is correct.



Rouen Cathedral, West Façade (1894; 39⅜x25⅞), by Claude Monet, uses color vibration—an oscillation of juxtaposed colors—to create a visual effect, allowing the colors to mix optically.

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART, WASHINGTON DC. CHESTER DALE COLLECTION

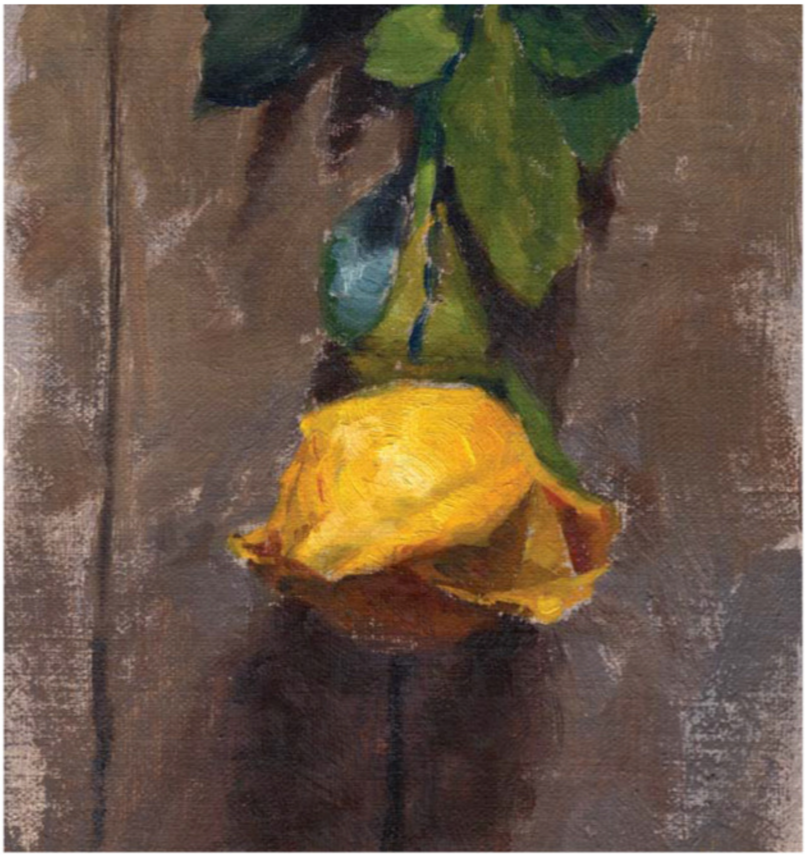


Rouen Cathedral, West Façade (detail) by Claude Monet

CENTERED CREATIVITY

A painting is an interpretation of the natural world—not a replica. Allow yourself to work in a playful manner while slowly moving toward expression with your color and mark-making. If you ground your painting with accurate value and drawing, you can allow your creative spirit to come through with expressive color and brush language.

Todd M. Casey is an award-winning painter, a sought-after art instructor and author of The Art of Still Life *and* The Oil Painter's Color Handbook.



The brush language is visible in **Yellow Rose Study** (oil on panel, 7x6), which adds energy and drama to the painting.

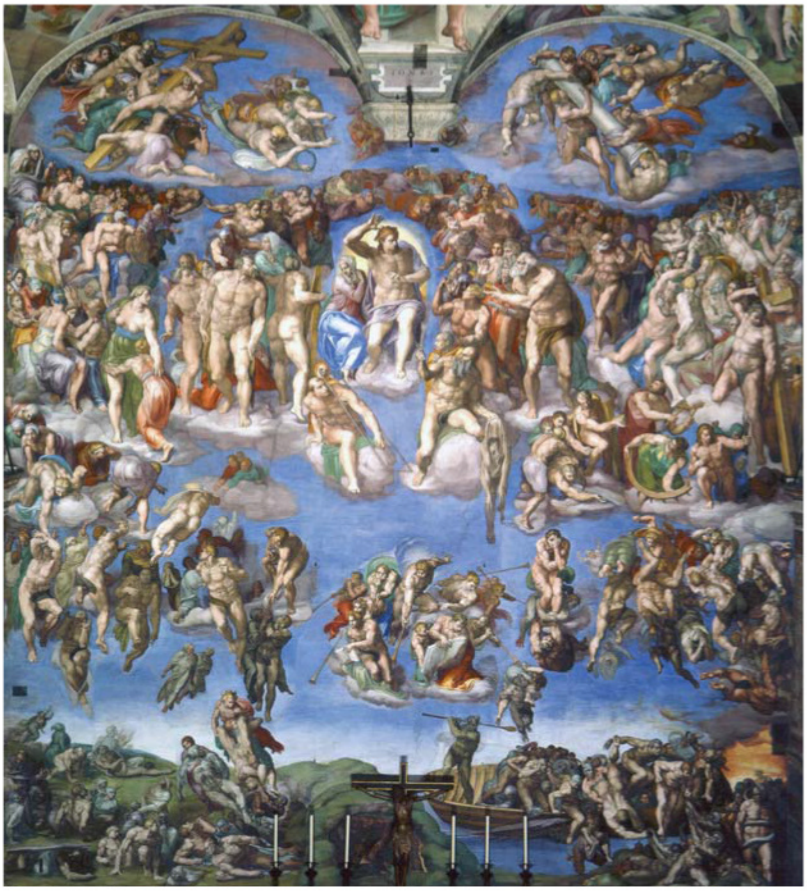
Feeling Blue

The color of sea and sky can imply meaning and emotion wherever you use it.

—COURTNEY JORDAN

"Blue has no dimensions; it is beyond dimensions." —Yves Klein

The color blue has traditionally symbolized serenity, inspiration and wisdom. It's also often used to convey human characteristics such as dependability and trustworthiness, and can express sadness and melancholy when used on its own. Here's a quick look at how the primary color has evolved in meaning, material and use throughout history—and how you can harness it to create powerful effects in your own artwork.



The Last Judgment (ca 1536–41; fresco, 15x13⅓ yards) by Michelangelo Buonarroti
VATICAN CITY, SISTINE CHAPEL. PHOTOGRAPHER: ALONSO DE MENDOZA/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

True Blue Ideals

- If you want a scene to have an overall cool tone, an underpainting of blue serves as a strong foundation.
- To convey the look of far-off vistas in a landscape, use a touch of blue to create a sense of depth and atmospheric distance.
- When painting a nocturne, a monochromatic blue palette keeps things simple and straightforward. The rich blue establishes the shadow forms, while adding white creates highlights and contrast.

What Lies Beneath

- When painting blue eyes, it's easy to overuse blue, which can make them look unnatural. To achieve better color harmony, try mixing some of the flesh tones from the eyelid and surrounding skin into the iris color.
- This approach goes for painting skies and bodies of water, too. Too much of any one color can reduce the amount of dimension you create, so seek out the undertones to break up the blues for a more realistic outcome.
- When in doubt, a dab of orange knocks back blue. Determining which orange works best is likely a trial-and-error process, so reserve some time to experiment with color mixes for these trickier passages.

Warm vs. Cool

As is true with all pigments, different blues run either warm or cool.

- Ultramarine and Prussian blue usually appear warm, with a reddish undertone.
- Phthalo blue, cerulean blue and cobalt turquoise lean toward the cool side and have a green tone to them.

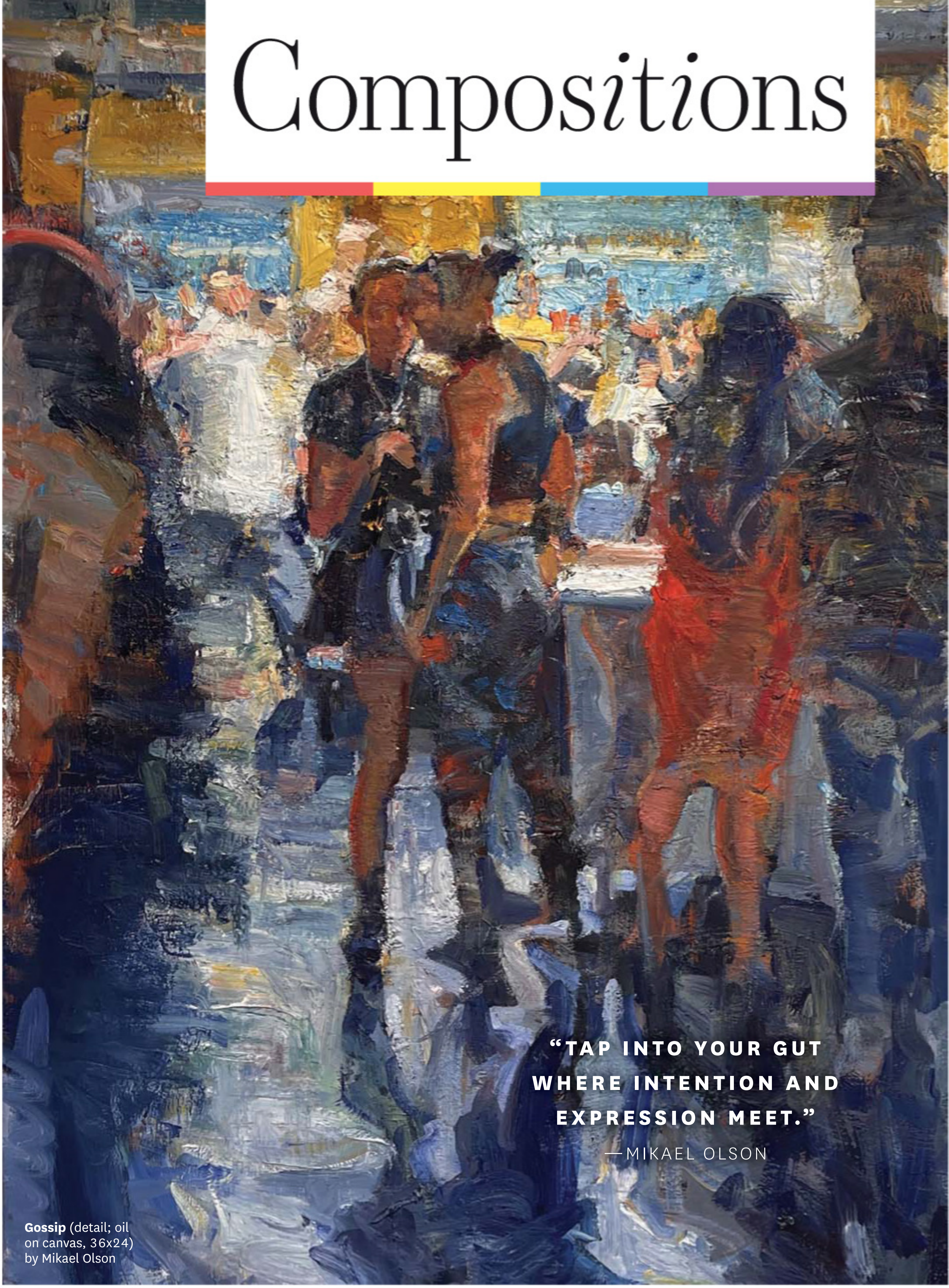
Clear vs. Opaque

- Keep in mind that opaque blue hues—ultramarine blue, cobalt blue and cerulean blue—are best when working in impasto, for total surface coverage and for complete color blending.
- Phthalo blue, turquoise blue and manganese blue run the gamut from semiopaque to semitransparent. They're ideal for building depth and achieving both bold and subtle tones.
- Transparent and semitransparent blues, such as Prussian blue, Winsor blue and phthalo turquoise, are best for layering and glazing.
- Remember: If a paint straight from the tube is too opaque, you can always add a medium to adjust its transparency.

Did You Know?

- The ancient Egyptians developed the first blue pigments around the same time they built the Great Pyramids. Crafting this early blue required a precise and labor-intensive process, including heating a mixture of materials to more than 1,400 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Ultramarine, crafted from the lapis lazuli gemstone, was historically touted as "true blue." The costly source guaranteed that only the most central figures in the most important paintings were adorned with it, such as those in Michelangelo's *The Last Judgment*.
- In 1960, French artist Yves Klein (1928–62) patented his own shade of ultramarine, which he named International Klein Blue.

Compositions



"TAP INTO YOUR GUT WHERE INTENTION AND EXPRESSION MEET."

—MIKAEL OLSON

Gossip (detail; oil on canvas, 36x24) by Mikael Olson

MOMENTS OF ILLUMINATION

For **Raymond Bonilla**, light isn't just a visual element—it's a portal to the memory of the deeply personal moments that shape a life, rendered with painterly precision.

By John A. Parks

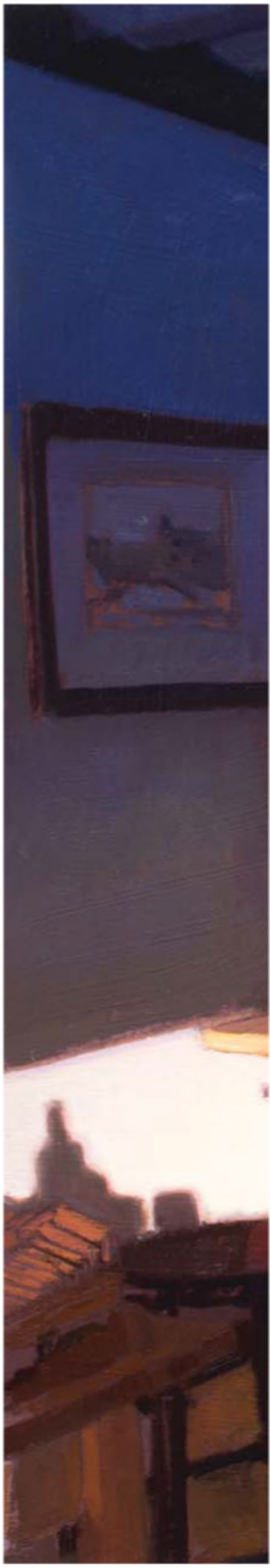
There are times when light utterly transforms a setting, sometimes evoking an almost mystical feeling. On a cloudy day, for instance, a shaft of sunlight may penetrate for a moment, illuminating a small section of landscape to produce a glorious blaze of color in an otherwise gray world. Or a ray of late afternoon sun might find its way into a darkened room, striking a small length of wall or the corner of a piece of furniture, like a benign and spectacular visitation. This searchlight effect can carry with it a sense of meaning, perhaps even divine intervention—something that has long been known to painters of religious subjects.

For Massachusetts-based painter Raymond Bonilla, the transformative effects of light are a way of conveying his strength of feeling about scenes that form pivotal moments in his life. Buildings, interiors, outings, still lifes and landscapes are caught at a moment of transformation as the sun bathes them in an unexpected glow. "Everything I draw and paint is a moment in time in my life that holds significance to me," he says. "The act of image-making is my attempt to preserve that memory for myself."

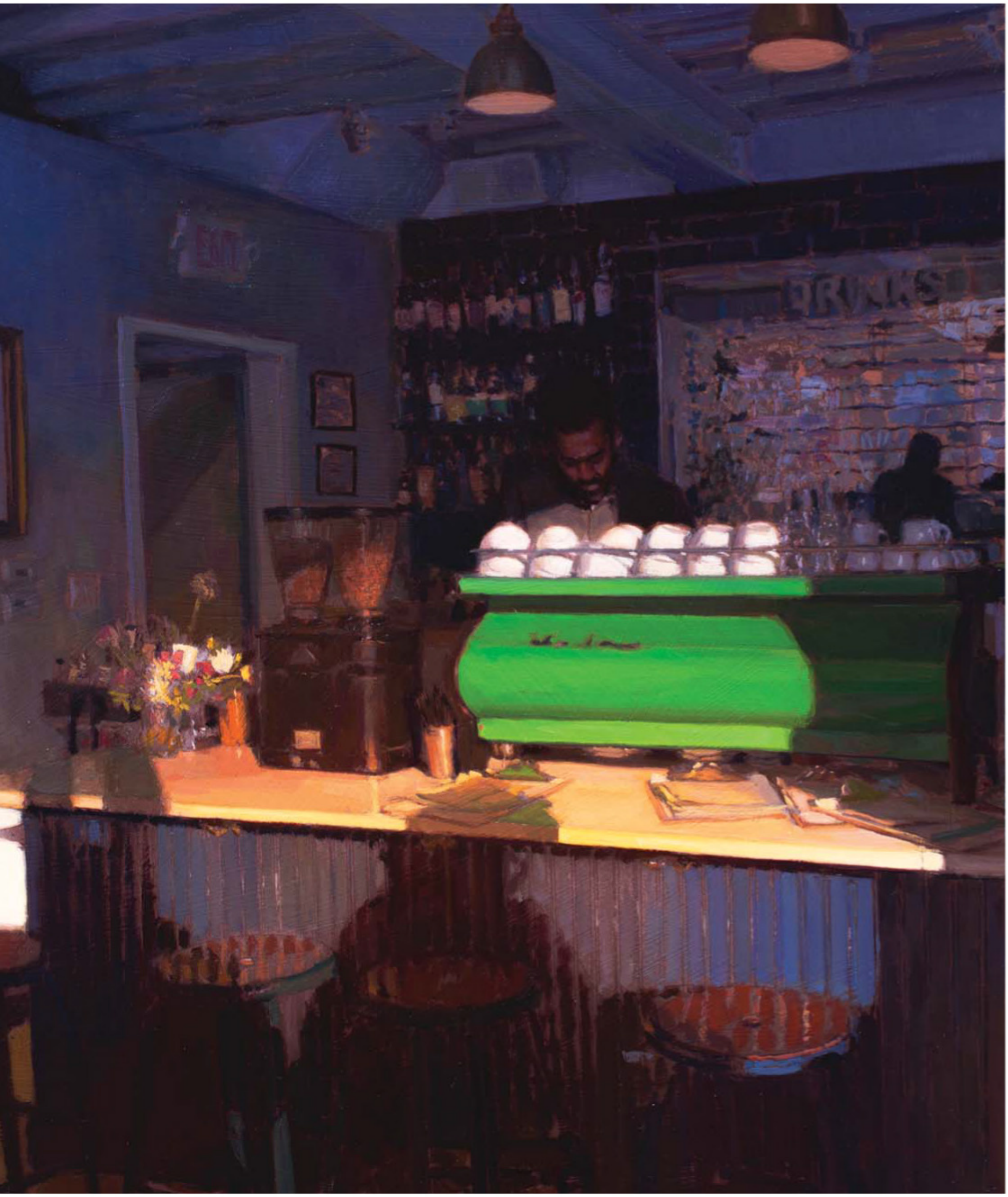
TOOLS & TECHNIQUES

Bonilla's paintings usually start with a meaningful photo. "My process begins by studying and documenting nature through photography," he says. "From there, I heavily manipulate the photo to build a reference that's closer to how I remember a particular moment."

To do this, Bonilla uses Photoshop to crop out or collage elements that aren't in the original photo. He also works on the color and tonality of the image and makes sketches and color studies. "I try to get my vision as finished as possible in the study," he says, "so I'm able to see my initial concept clearly. Then I ask myself what I would change if it were the final piece. I'll either make those changes to the study itself, or scan it into Photoshop and digitally paint on it. Or, sometimes, I'll proceed straight to the painting with those changes in mind."



Remedy (oil on panel, 24x24)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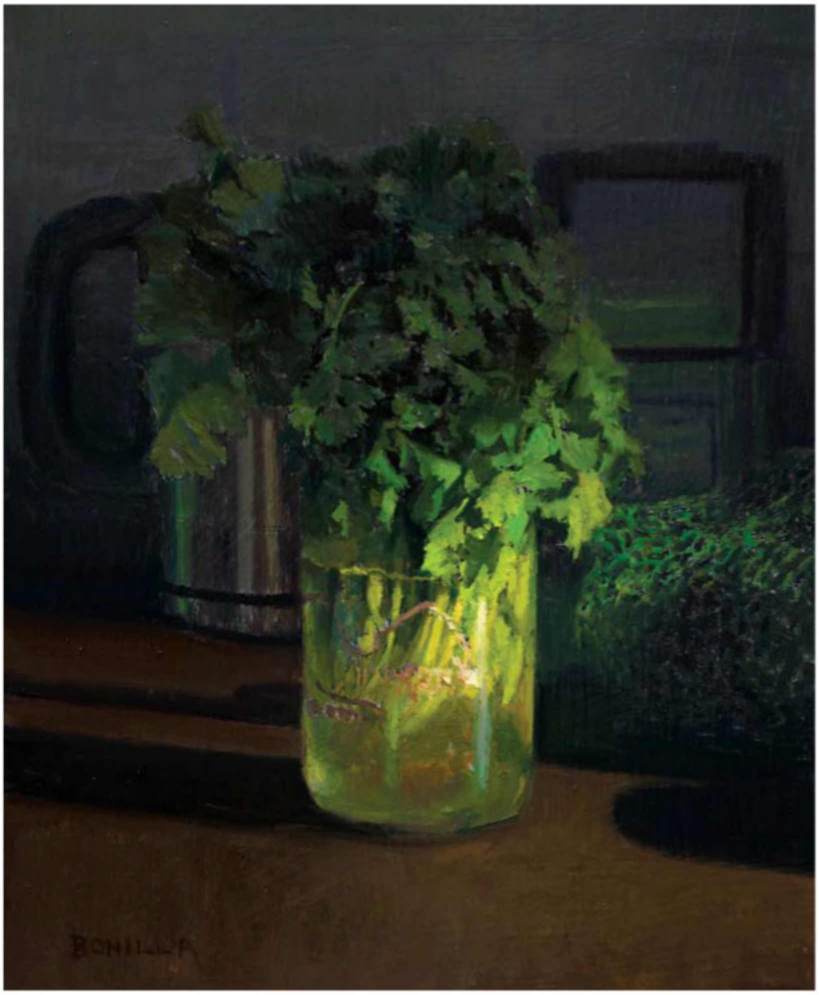
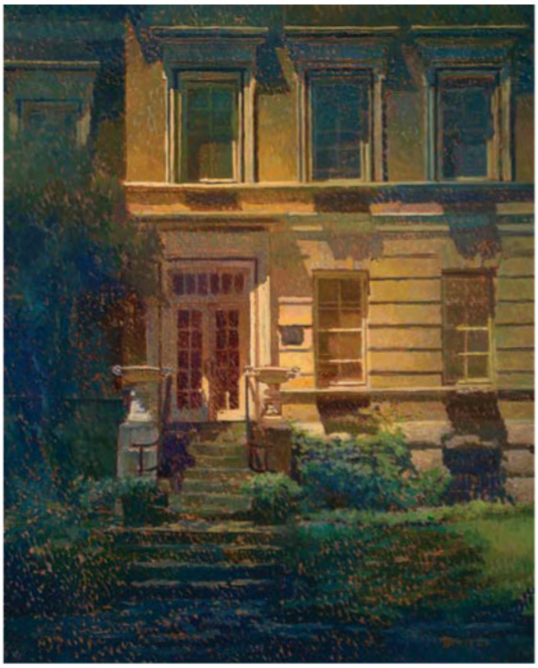




ABOVE
New Thing
(oil on panel, 10x8)

LEFT
Bingo
(oil on panel, 24x30)

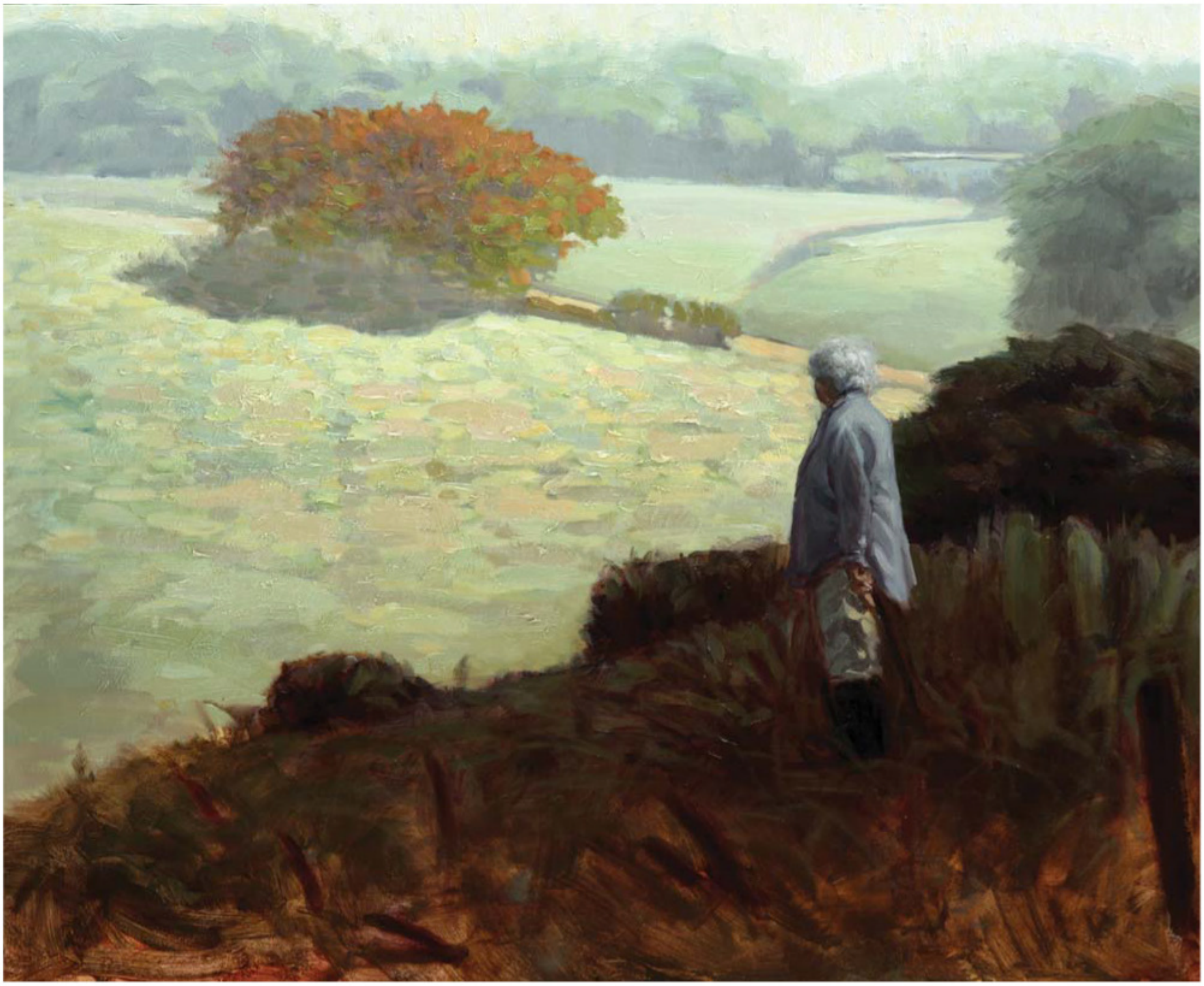
OPPOSITE
Flamboyan
(oil on canvas, 24x30)

Bonilla uses a variety of underpainting and overpainting strategies to build up to finishes that range from painterly to polished. "I let the subject matter and the complexity of the composition dictate the type of approach and kind of finish that's needed," he says. "I'm very flexible. I never do a painting the same way twice. Sometimes I'll begin by massing in the image with big blocks of color. Other times, I'll transfer the drawing through a projector."

Another transfer method the artist uses is to make a rough layout tracing from the study, which he can then manipulate a little before printing it out to the size he desires for his finished painting and mounting it on the surface. Occasionally, he'll do a mixed-media drawing using airbrush acrylic and colored pencil—a process akin to an old-time poster illustration technique. "It gives you a full-color, full-value, somewhat painterly look without having to use any oil paint," he says. "I'll do a small drawing, blow it up to the final size I want, mount it and then paint right on it."

Once the layout is established, Bonilla creates an underpainting—generally a monochrome version of the image—for which he'll choose from a variety of colors. "If it's a very warm image, and I want it to feel warm, I'll start with the warm ground," he says, "and if it's cool, I'll start with the cooler ground. If I want to add color contrast, I might jump in with some colors. Generally, I'll do an underpainting cool, knowing that I'll be putting warm colors on top—and vice versa. And for those times when I don't really care, I'll work on a neutral ground."

The artist also employs a range of different techniques to apply the underpainting. Sometimes he'll do a cursory lift-out—a sketch in which the lights are created by wiping out paint to reveal the white ground beneath. He usually does this in gouache, then seals and paints on top of it in oil or acrylic. Sometimes, he'll do a full opaque underpainting in acrylic or oil, then build up the color. Other times, he'll start directly with color and scrub in the forms.



Once the underpainting is complete, Bonilla again chooses from a few different approaches to develop the painting. “I’ll start with bristle brushes if I really need to get some paint on fast because I want to build it up or move it around earlier in the process,” he says. If he’s going for a more scrubby look, he’ll use synthetic brushes instead. “I’ll use the paint a little bit thinner but not actually transparent,” he continues. “I generally work as opaquely as possible because I find that the color moves in and out of itself nicely. Then I can add broken color on top, a lot later.”

Just how far Bonilla pushes his painting also varies considerably. “The finish of my works depends largely on the subject matter,” he says. “In every case, I let the painting decide how much information it needs in order to properly communicate its intended meaning. I try to ‘listen’ to the painting—and then get out of its way.”

The artist’s basic approach to underpainting can be seen in *Bingo* (opposite). The underpainting was begun with a mix of burnt umber and burnt sienna gouache, which was painted as a lift-out. The darks were then reinforced using colored pencil, and the lights were strengthened using white acrylic paint. The painting was then built on top in oil, using heavier paint in the lights and more transparent layers in the shadows. “I was thinking about how much I could let the underpainting ‘breathe’ in between my strokes,” says Bonilla. “That’s why I used the hatched strokes. The greater transparency in the shadow areas creates a sense of depth and maintains color activity in the shadows throughout the painting.”

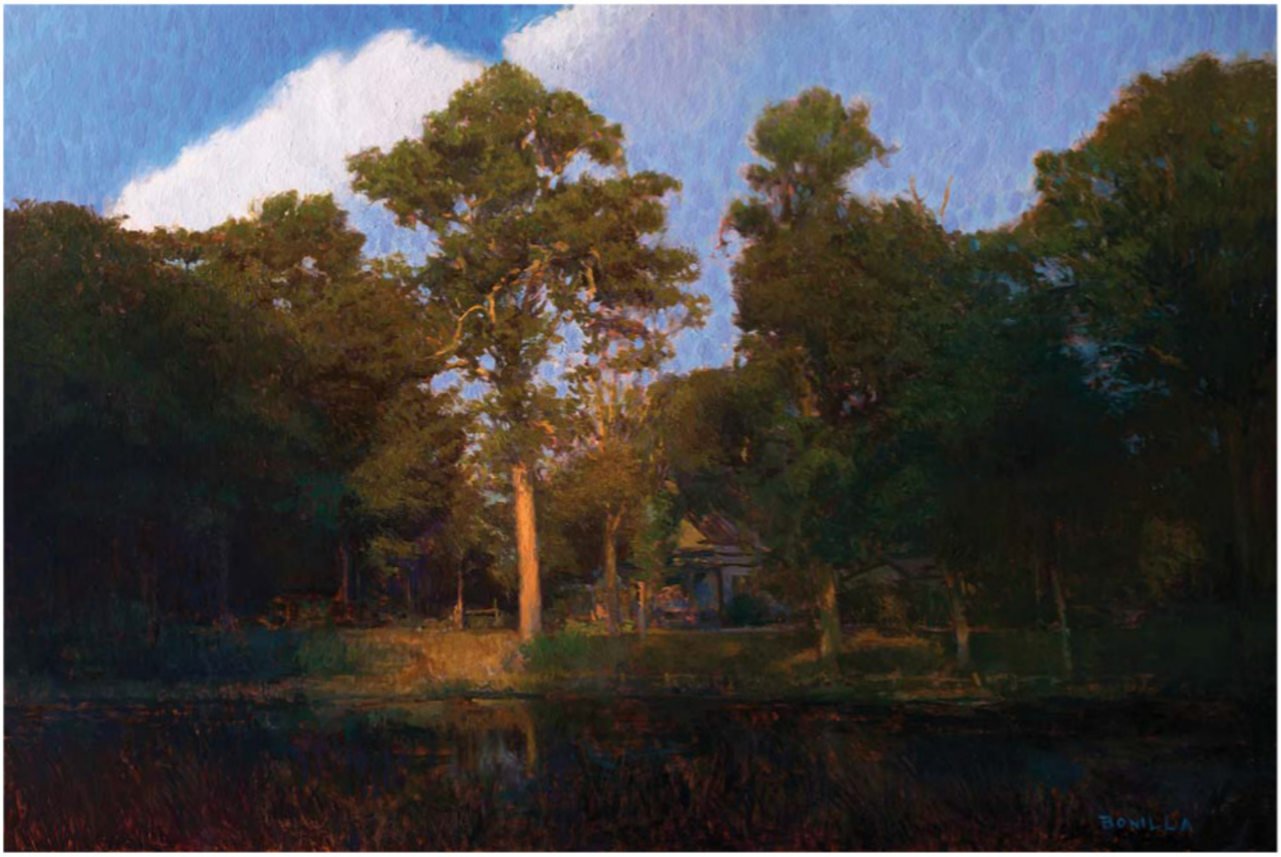
ARTIST’S TOOLKIT

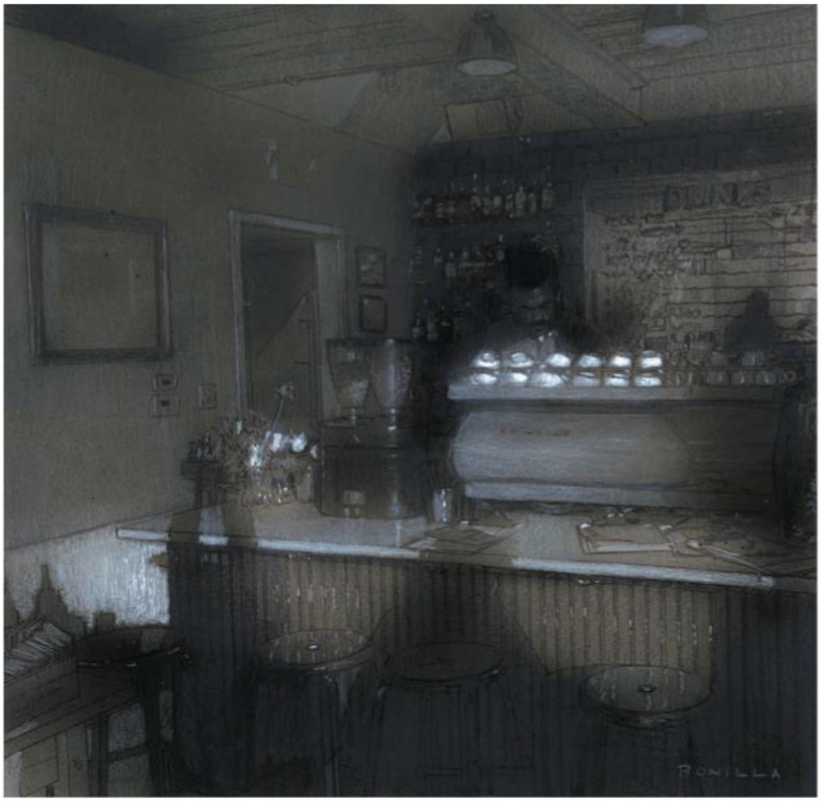
Surface: Strathmore 300 vellum bristol paper for drawings; cradled wood, Ampersand and ACM panels for paintings

Paints: Winsor & Newton Professional acrylics, Griffin alkyds and Artists’ oils

Brushes: Robert Simmons Signet bristle and Princeton Summit 6100 flat synthetic

Other Tools: Prismacolor colored pencils





LIGHT & MEMORY

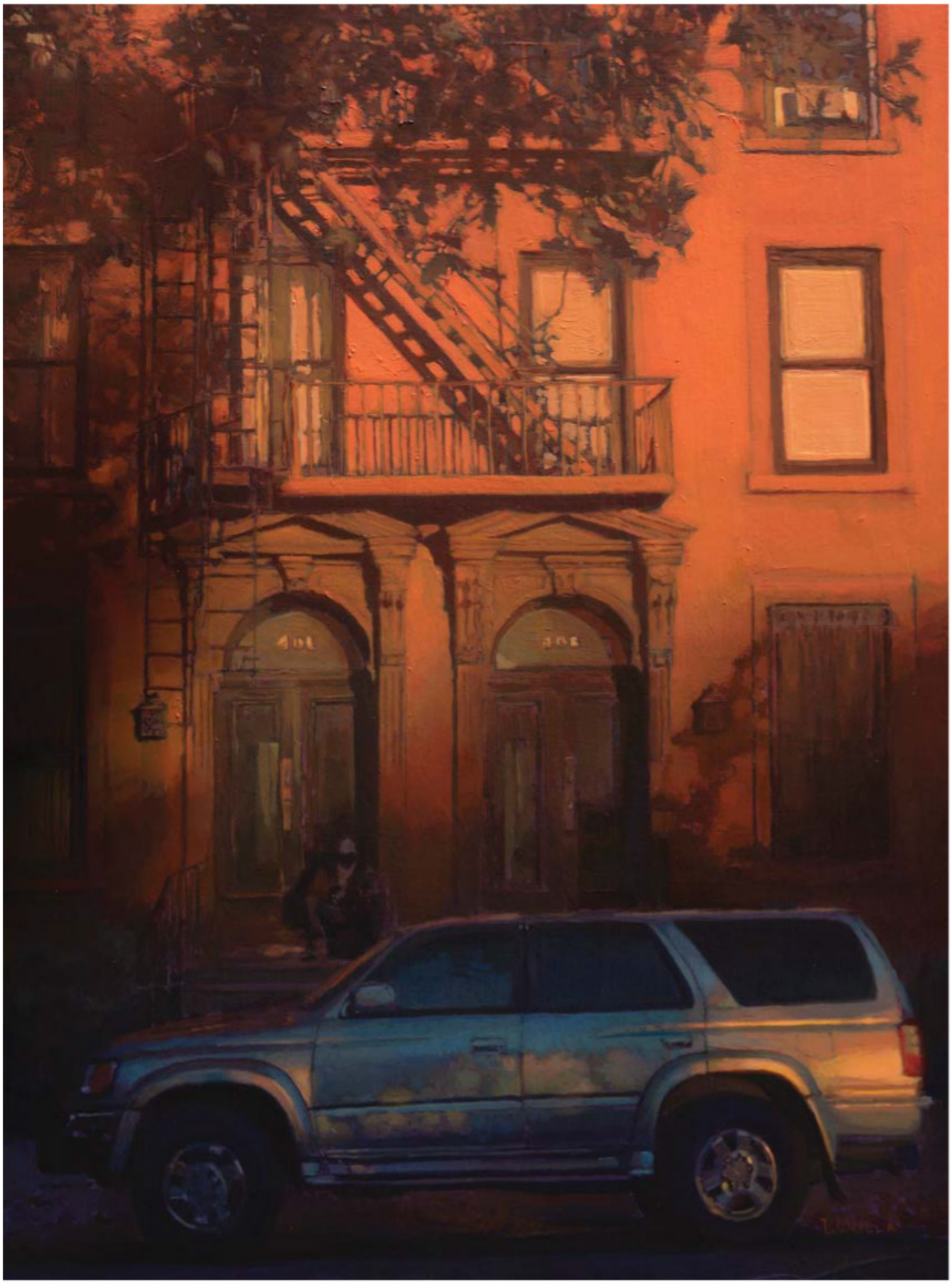
Another painting, *Remedy* (pages 28-29), presents a scene laden with memories of the artist's former hometown, Buffalo, N.Y. The shadowy interior of a coffee shop is pierced by a powerful ray of afternoon sun, striking a brilliant green coffee machine. The effect is dazzling and overwhelming, yet benign. "After a long, stormy winter, we finally had a day nice enough that we could be outside," says Bonilla. "My wife and I decided to stroll to a nearby coffee shop and get a cappuccino. I remember walking in, and the afternoon light was hitting everything perfectly. I said, 'This is like medicine, just being outside and with each other.' And so, if you look at the table, you'll see a cast shadow of two figures; that's my wife and me."

Here again, the painting is built over a warm ground of burnt sienna and umber. The spectacular saturation of the green is reinforced by more restrained color throughout the rest of the painting.

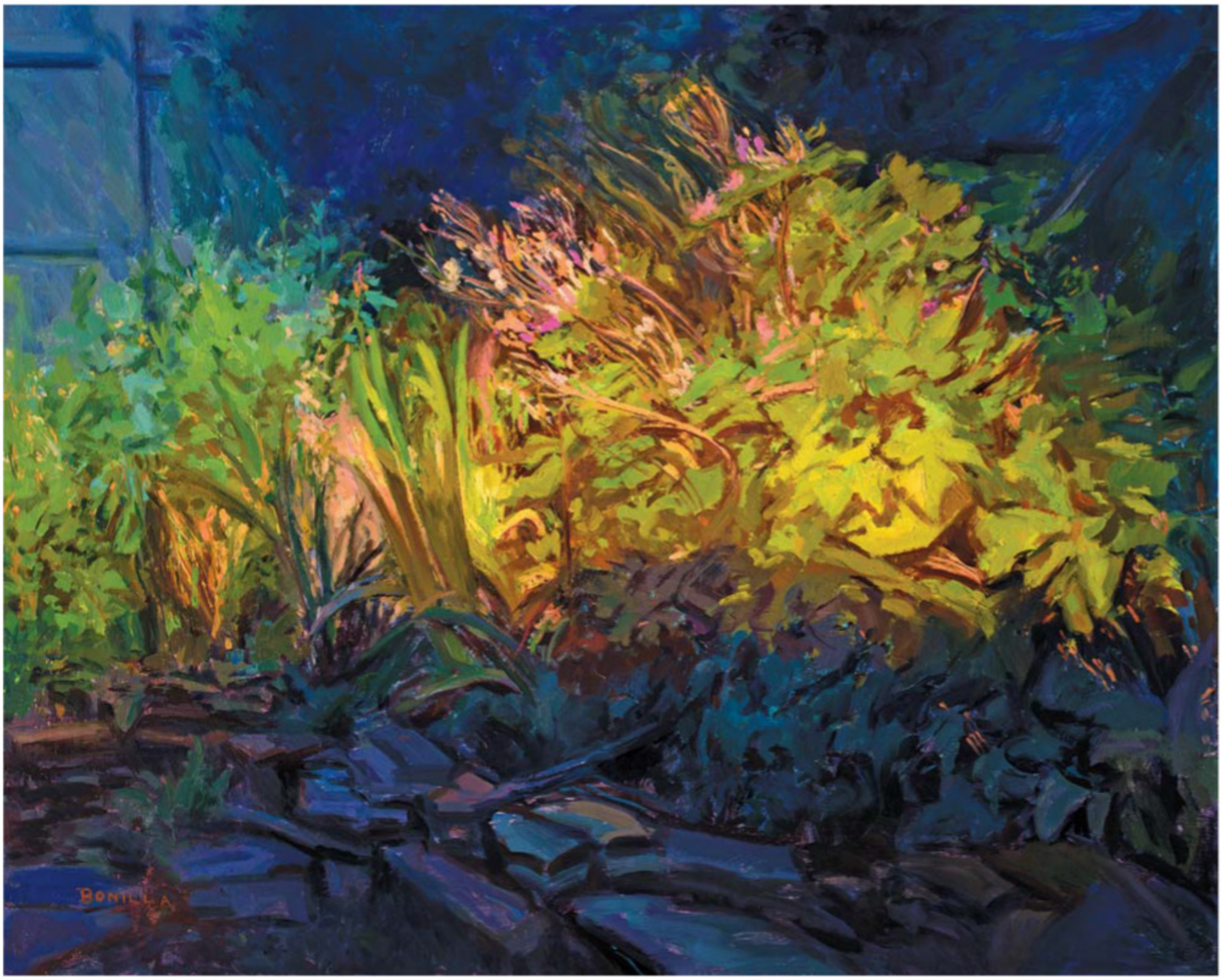
OPPOSITE TOP
After Ice Cream
(oil on panel,
24x36)

OPPOSITE BOTTOM
Study for Remedy
(mixed media on
paper, 10x10)

RIGHT
By Jim's Place
(acrylic on
canvas, 24x18)



"I LET THE PAINTING DECIDE HOW MUCH INFORMATION IT NEEDS IN ORDER TO PROPERLY COMMUNICATE ITS INTENDED MEANING. I TRY TO 'LISTEN' TO THE PAINTING— AND THEN GET OUT OF ITS WAY." —RAYMOND BONILLA



ABOVE
Struggle
(oil on panel, 24x30)

OPPOSITE TOP
New Year's Day, 2018
(acrylic on panel, 24x24)

In some paintings, Bonilla seems more interested in the overall condition of the light rather than a searchlight effect. In *New Years Day, 2018* (opposite) for instance, a snowy, wooded landscape is suffused with a golden afternoon light as a group of figures trudges down a broad pathway. Once again, the image is memorable for the artist; it depicts his family's tradition of taking a hike on New Year's Day, whatever the weather. Here, the light imparts a feeling of warmth and hope in an otherwise wintry setting. Applied over a warm ground, much of the painting is achieved with tiny dabs and strokes of color.

Other works address parts of Bonilla's early life. His family is from Puerto Rico, and, although the artist grew up in the United States, he spent many summers there as a boy, staying with his grandparents on their small farm. *Flamboyan* (page 31) portrays the artist's grandmother looking over a valley to a large, colorful tree—a Flamboyan—which stood on the family property. As a boy, Bonilla was always impressed by the brilliant color of the tree. When he returned to Puerto Rico as an adult, after his grandfather had died, he took a walk with his grandmother, which this painting memorializes. "It's not exactly what the camera saw, but it's the way I remember it," he says.

AN INSPIRED VISION

Bonilla's command of a variety of painting techniques stems from his deep interest in technical processes in illustration and painting. As a child growing up in Queens, N.Y., he was interested in comic book art and eventually studied art in college—first at Fredonia, SUNY, and later at the Academy of Art University, in San Francisco. Although his initial major was animation, he soon became interested in painting.

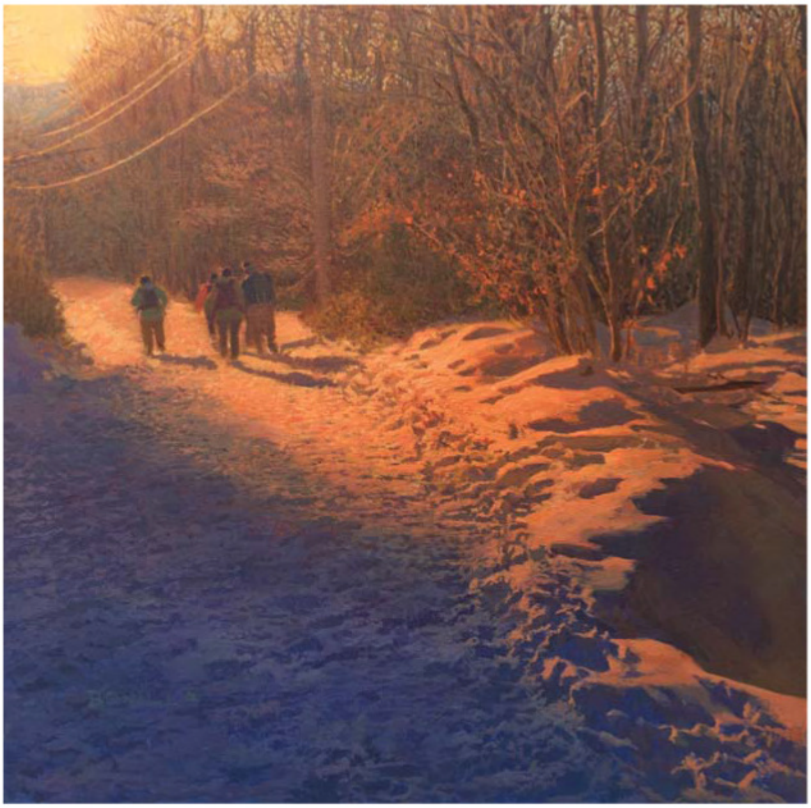
As mentors, Bonilla cites Alberto Rey, William Maughan, Craig Nelson and John Rush—all of whom taught him the fundamentals of picture-making. “I was also fortunate to study under renowned artists such as Lisa Berrett, Jeannie Brunnick, Tomutsu Takishima and Zhao Ming Wu, to name a few,” he says. “And I was very lucky to befriend the Hall of Fame illustrator David Grove, who was instrumental in guiding me during my studies.”

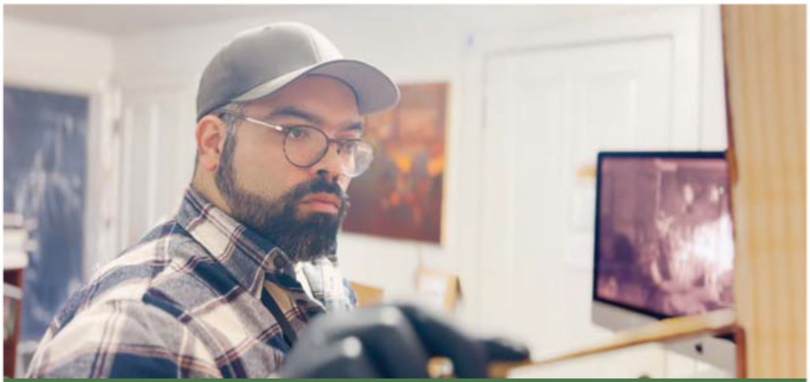
Working between the worlds of illustration and painting, one of Bonilla’s most powerful influences became the Brandywine School of painting, which was built around Howard Pyle and included such legendary artists as N.C. Wyeth, Frank Schoonover and Harvey Dunn. Their use of light, rich color and the ability to create fully realized worlds in their pictures continues to impress him.

Other artists who inspire Bonilla feature a mix of illustrators and painters, including John Singer Sargent, Dean Cornwell, Thomas Blackshear, Mark English, Daniel Garber, Diego Velázquez, The Brothers Hildebrandt, Haddon Sundblom and Andrew Wyeth.

While Bonilla has clearly absorbed an enormous amount of knowledge and expertise in painting and drawing, his real achievement is using it all to forge a unique and highly personal vision driven by his own life experience. Asked how he’d like viewers to respond to his work, he says: “I think one of the greatest compliments that I ever received was from an incredible artist by the name of Kazuhiko Sano, who told me that my work makes him want to share stories of his own. If I can make the viewer feel that, I will have accomplished what I set out to do.”

John A. Parks is a painter and a member of the faculty at the School of Visual Arts, in New York City. He writes regularly for Artists Network magazines.

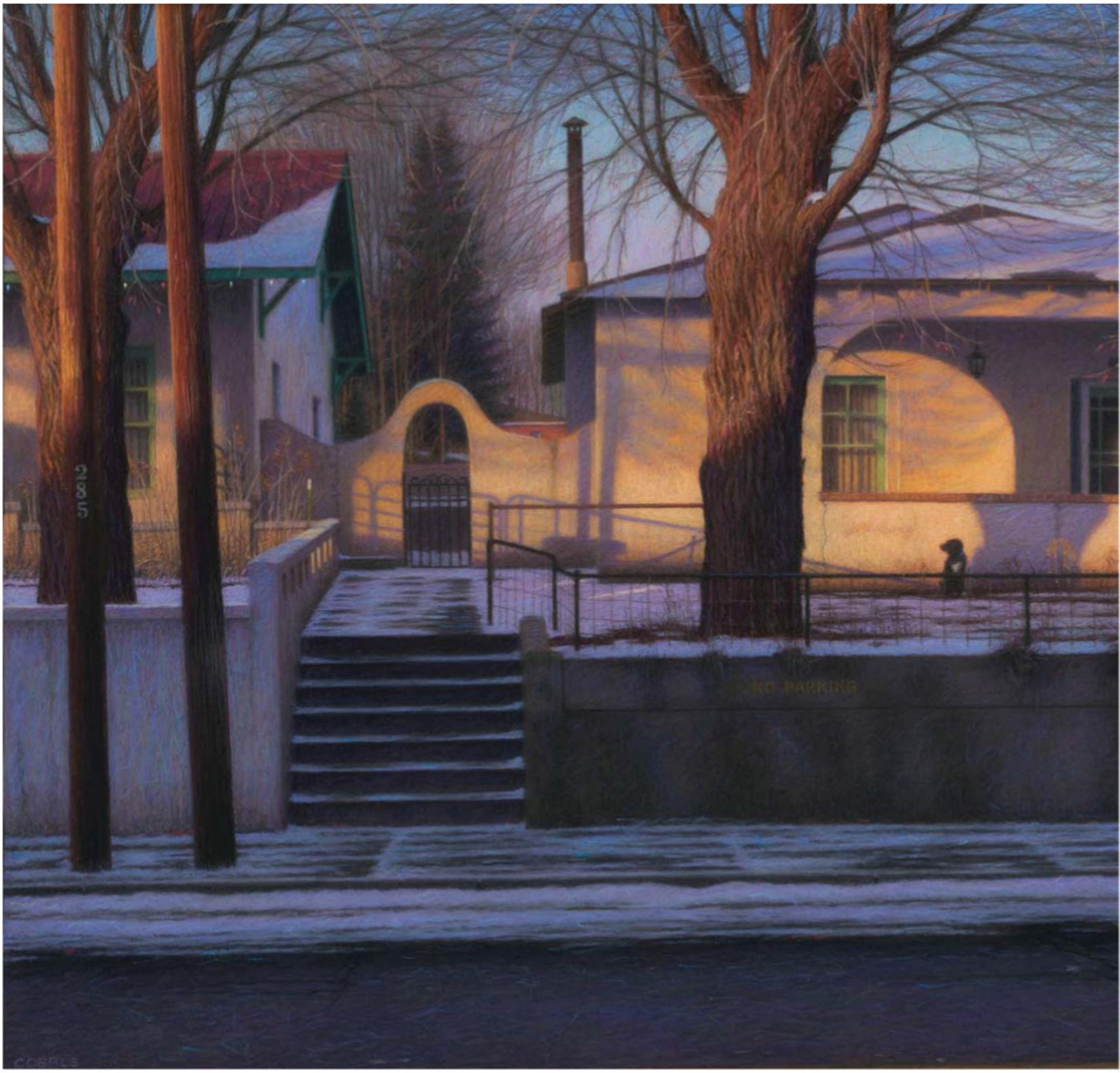




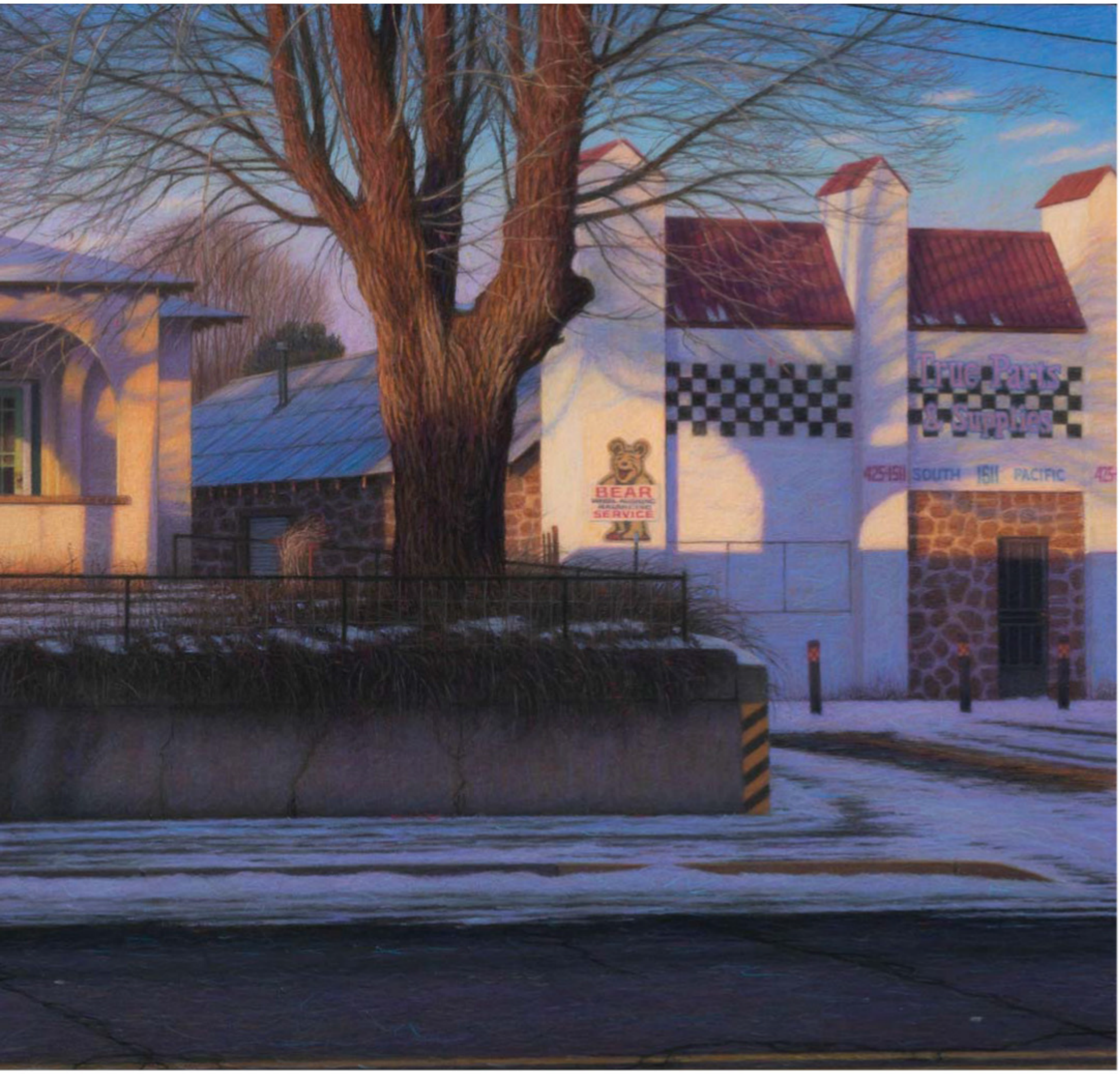
MEET THE ARTIST

Raymond Bonilla was born in Queens, N.Y., and spent his childhood summers in Puerto Rico with his extended family. “I grew up reading lots of comic books,” says the artist. “One day, I went to the comic book shop, and I saw a line of people waiting to have their comic books signed by someone. When I asked who the person was, I was told that he was an artist.” In that moment, Bonilla decided that he, too, wanted to create imagery that makes connections with others. He studied at SUNY Fredonia, with the aim of becoming an animator, but soon also became interested in illustration and painting. He went on to study 3D character animation at the Academy of Art University, in San Francisco, where his interest in painting continued to grow. After college he worked as a freelance illustrator and began showing his work in art galleries. He’s represented by Meibohm Fine Arts, in East Aurora, N.Y.; Principle Gallery, in Alexandria, Va.; Momentum Gallery, in Asheville, N.C.; and Abend Gallery, in Denver. The artist makes his home in Mattapoisett, Mass., with his wife and daughter.

VISIT RAYMONDBONILLA.COM TO LEARN MORE.


285
NO PARKING
COBBLE

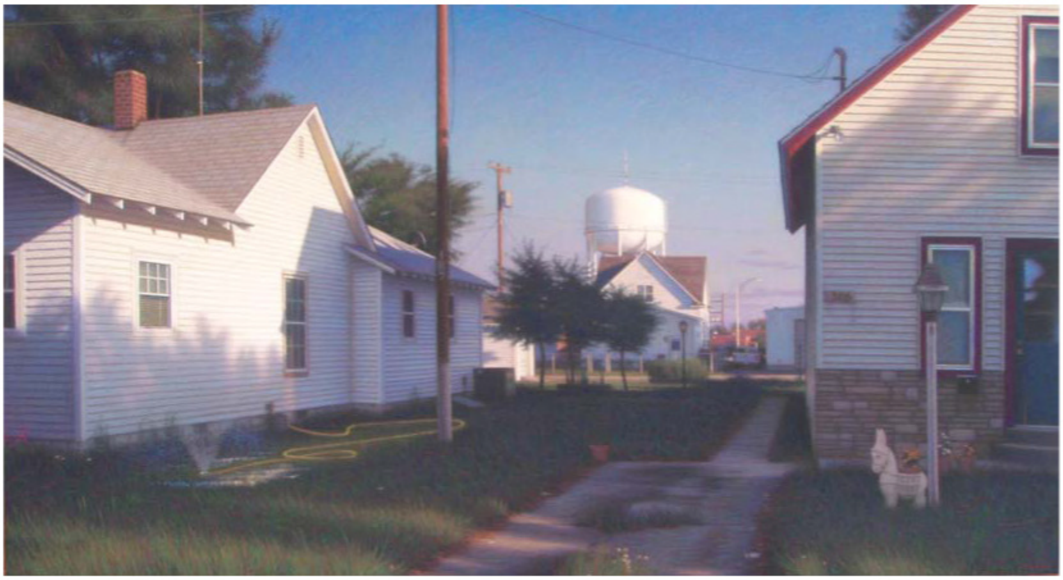
Awe & Atmosphere



Winter Sun (pastel on board, 17¼x35¾)

By allowing compositions to develop organically, **Brian Cobble** creates pastel landscapes of stunning beauty that are captivating in their light effects, spatial atmosphere and exquisite details. By Robert K. Carsten

I aim to make paintings of places that are special to me—places that I want to look at time and time again," says New Mexico-based artist Brian Cobble. "I'm trying to express awe and atmosphere through place and time—something beyond the factual or purely visual." Time of day, as well as the quality of light and atmosphere, are essential to this landscape artist's work. "The right light can make an otherwise mundane scene seem momentarily magical," he says.



LEFT
Lexington Evening
(pastel on board, 15½x28¼)

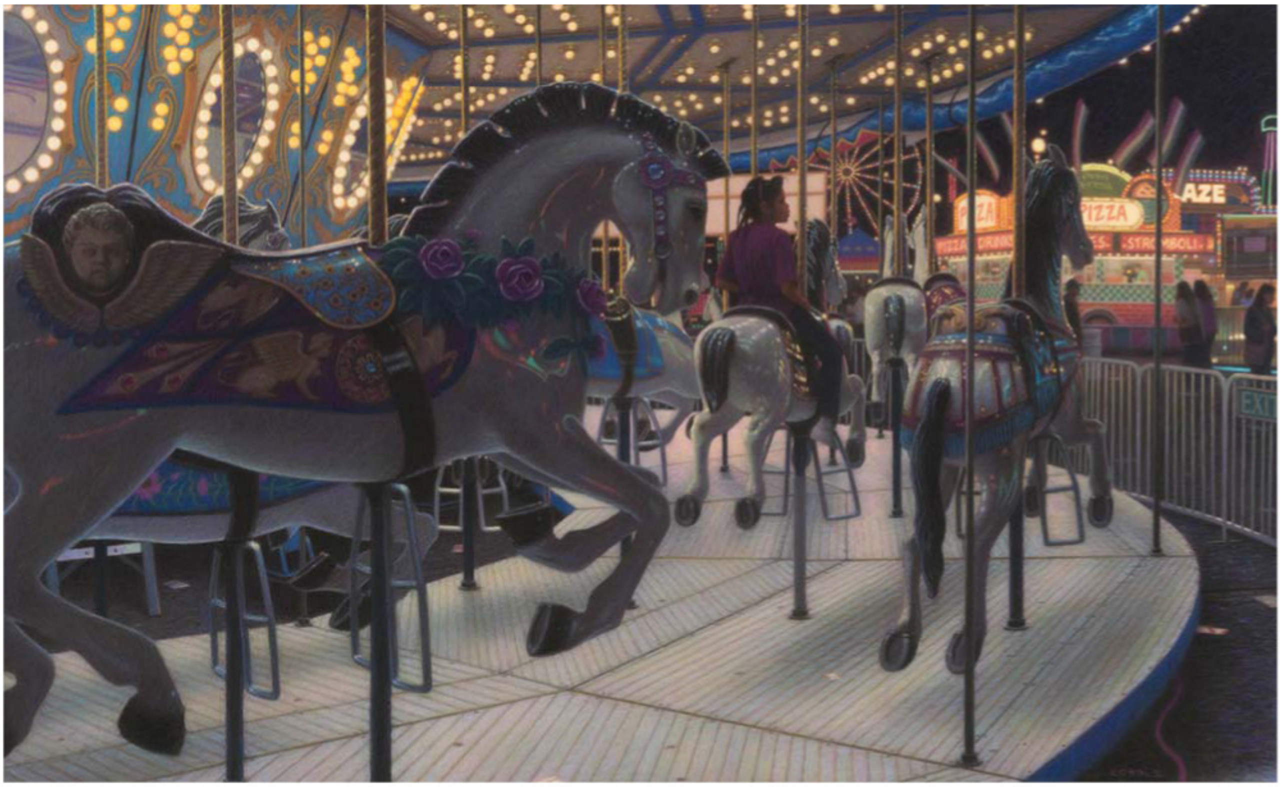
BELOW
Carousel
(pastel on board, 20½x34½)

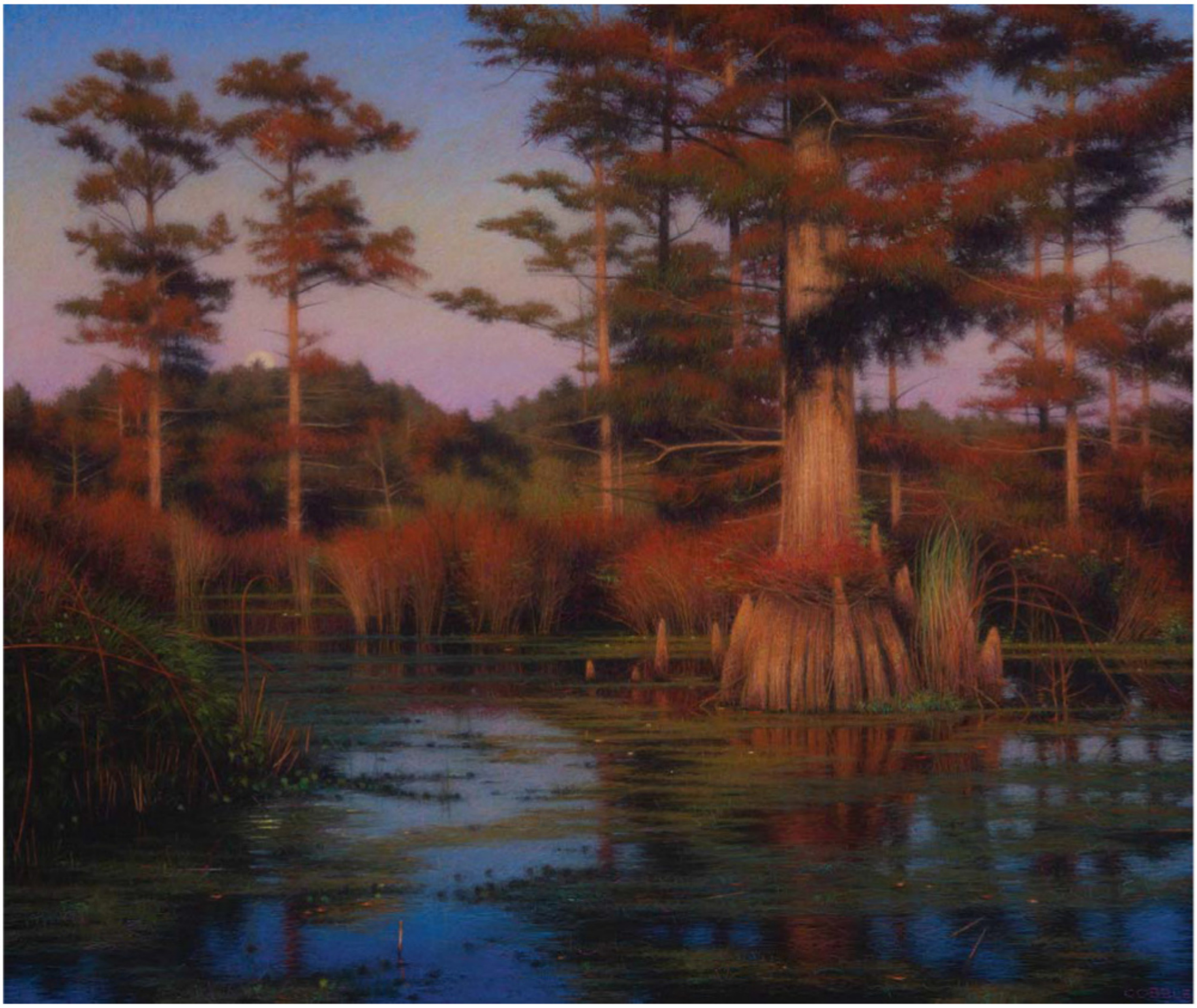
OPPOSITE
Rising Moon, Grassy Lake
(pastel on board, 19x22½)

THE ROAD TO SUCCESS

Having trained in oil painting from an early age, Cobble worked primarily in the medium until his mid-30s. Recurring eye problems, however, forced him to make an abrupt transition to pastels, in which he had only dabbled. “I suspect that it was the solvents and varnishes used in oil painting that I became sensitive to,” he says. “Unlike oil painting, though, I had to work pastel out all by myself. I guess that qualifies me as ‘self-taught.’ ”

The longer Cobble worked with pastels, the more determined he became in making complex, finished works that would rival, or perhaps surpass, what he had done in oil. Having read that Edgar Degas (French, 1834–1917) sometimes applied pastel over an oil painting when it wasn’t working, some of what Cobble considers his first successful large pastels were done over old, unfinished oil pieces. “Eventually though, I discovered that applying pastel over watercolor was the combination that worked best for me,” he says. “The watercolor underpainting helps add depth and visual weight to my pastels.”





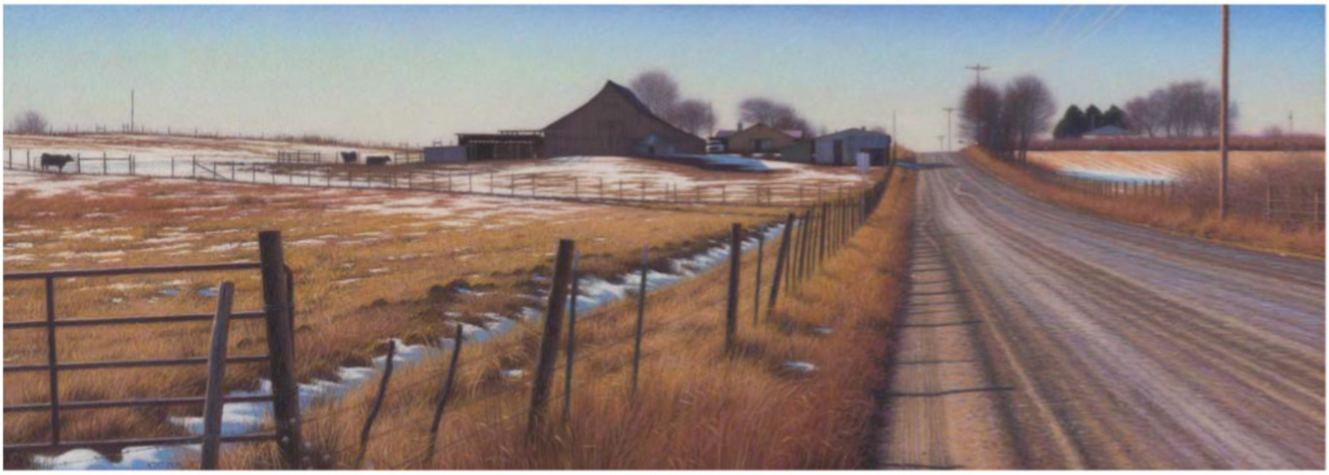
> **“BECAUSE I DON’T BLEND MY PASTELS, I ACHIEVE THE MUTED COLORS IN THE SKY AND WATER THROUGH MULTIPLE LAYERS OF COLOR.”** —BRIAN COBBLE

METHODS & MATERIALS

Cobble now has a large, well-lit studio with work spaces for each of the steps his paintings undergo, often keeping two or more paintings in progress simultaneously. Supply tables are filled with nearly every brand of pastel, although he most often uses harder sticks such as those made by Holbein, Rembrandt, Girault and Faber-Castell. “I usually create the composition as I go, working from multiple photos or simply a vague idea in my mind of the image I’m trying to create,” Cobble says. “That’s why I generally start with a full sheet of illustration board, working in the large elements and leaving the details to be worked out as I go. I also leave room on all four sides in case I need to expand the image in an unexpected direction.”

The artist prefers to work on Strathmore 500 Series vellum board for its subtle yet tough texture that stands up well to both watercolor and successive layers of pastel. “The first step is to work out the composition thoroughly with pencil,” Cobble says. Once the image is completed, which can take weeks of moving things around, adding or subtracting elements, or just letting it sit while another piece is being worked on, he tapes it flat onto a large drafting table.

The next step is to apply the watercolor underpainting. “This provides a color base for the pastel to react to and serves as a sort of armature for the pastel to build on,” Cobble continues. “I often give the watercolor underpainting an overall reddish or red-violet tone [see What Lies Beneath, page 42]. This gives the pastels something



Bayfield (pastel on board, 10½x30½)

to contrast with and lends an overall warm tone."

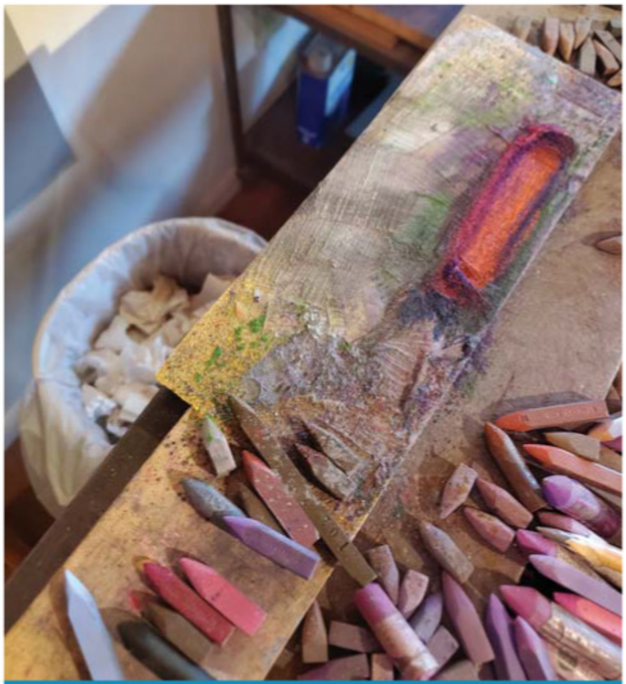
Once the underpainting is dry, Cobble adheres the illustration board to ¼-inch birch plywood using Lineco Neutral pH adhesive. He then moves the piece to an easel to apply layer after layer of pastel—broadly at first and then more carefully as the painting develops. "There's a lot of sharpening of pastels involved," Cobble notes. This is done against a sheet of sandpaper that he mounts to a board (see Get to the Point, right). "I don't blend using tools or my fingers, and I only occasionally use fixative," he says. "The effect of blending is achieved by many layers applied in pointillistic fashion, although with small strokes rather than dots. The layers vary in color and sometimes in value, which appear blended to the eye," says Cobble. Using this technique, a large painting can take several months to complete, depending on its complexity and detail.

ENCHANTED EVENINGS, IMPRESSIVE NIGHTS

In the case of the dazzlingly detailed nocturne, *Carousel* (page 38), Cobble says the image evolved over a couple of years. The starting point was the figure of the young girl, who was in a photo he had taken of a carousel at the state fair. A year or two later, he returned to the fair and took several dozen photos of the carousel. "The glare of the multitude of light bulbs on the carousel itself and on the midway beyond serve to backlight the large horse that's covered with mythological images," he says. "This gives the painting a slightly ominous or curious feeling."

The complexity of lighting in the painting demonstrates Cobble's nuanced control of color values and saturation. He captures both the reflectivity and darkness cast upon the carousel's shiny white horses all in relatively close, low values. This, in turn, allows the incandescent lights to appear to shine. "It's an effect that's hard to believe and even harder to capture, but it was too beautiful not to at least try," he says.

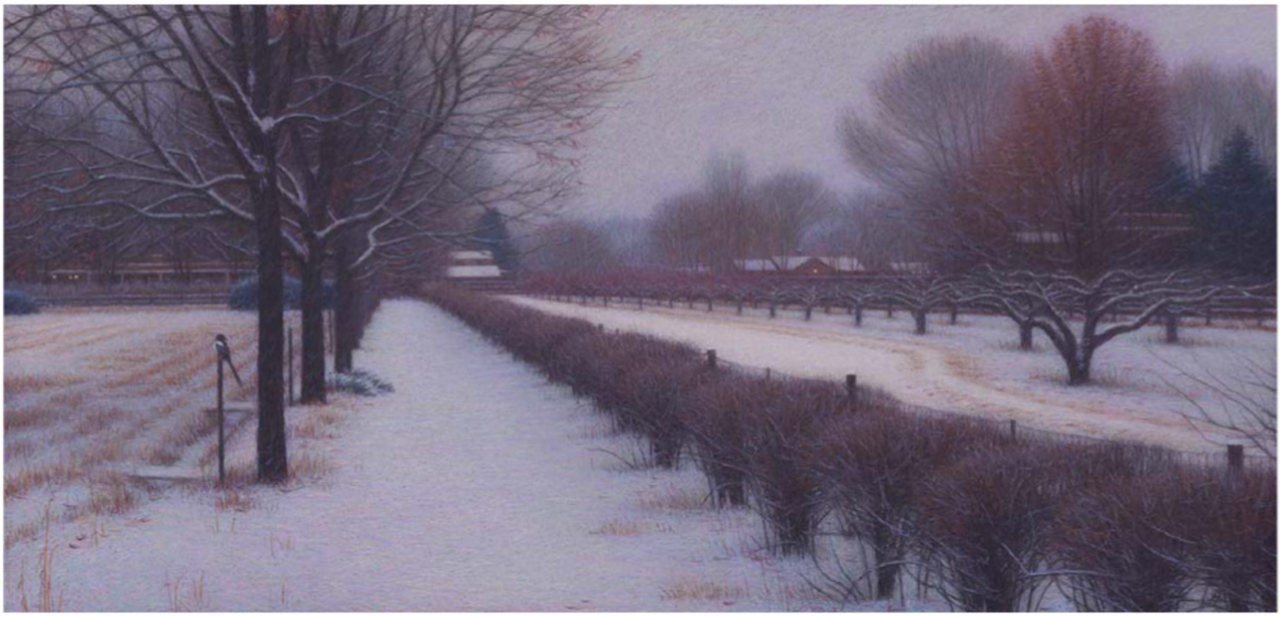
Cobble captures this effect in all its glory in *Rising*



GET TO THE POINT

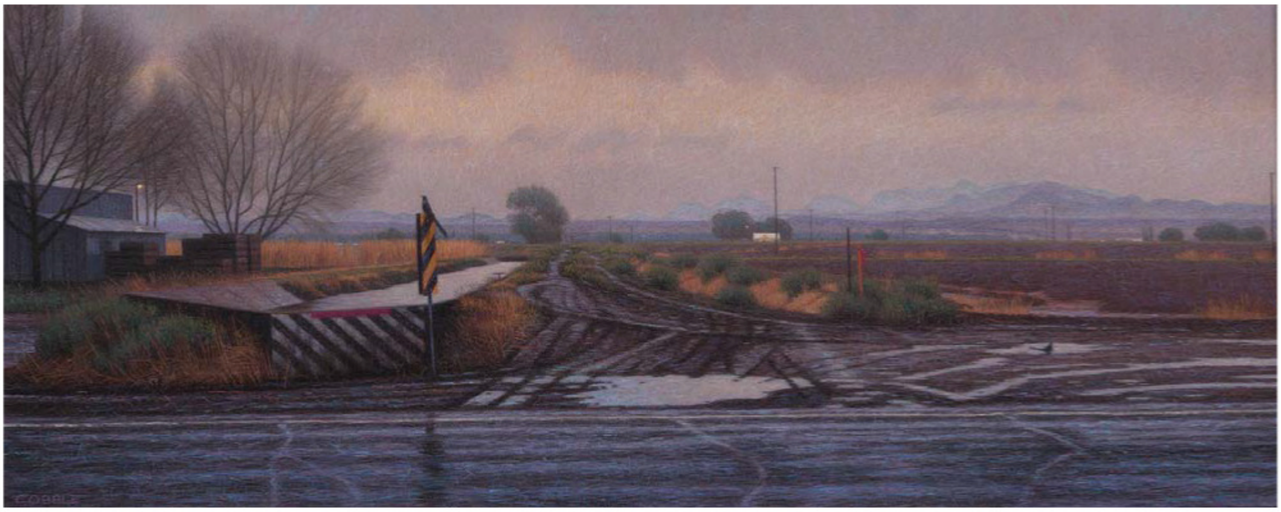
I sharpen my pastel sticks to create fine details, sharp edges and smooth transitions in my work. To sharpen a pastel, I hold the stick at a low angle against a sheet of 60- or 80-grit, coarse sandpaper glued to a 1x4-inch board. I slowly rotate the pastel—maybe a quarter-way around—and, in that process, slowly work it to a point. I don't apply too much pressure, or I risk breaking the stick. After it's sharpened, I wipe the pastel on a paper towel to remove the loose dust. Once I've got a pile of loose dust, I swipe it into the trash can positioned below.

In addition to pastel sticks, I also use sharpened pastel pencils to add intricate details, or to clean up or soften edges. —Brian Cobble



ABOVE **La Pie** (pastel on board, 10x21)

BELOW **Rain, Dona Anas** (pastel on board, 10¼x26¼)



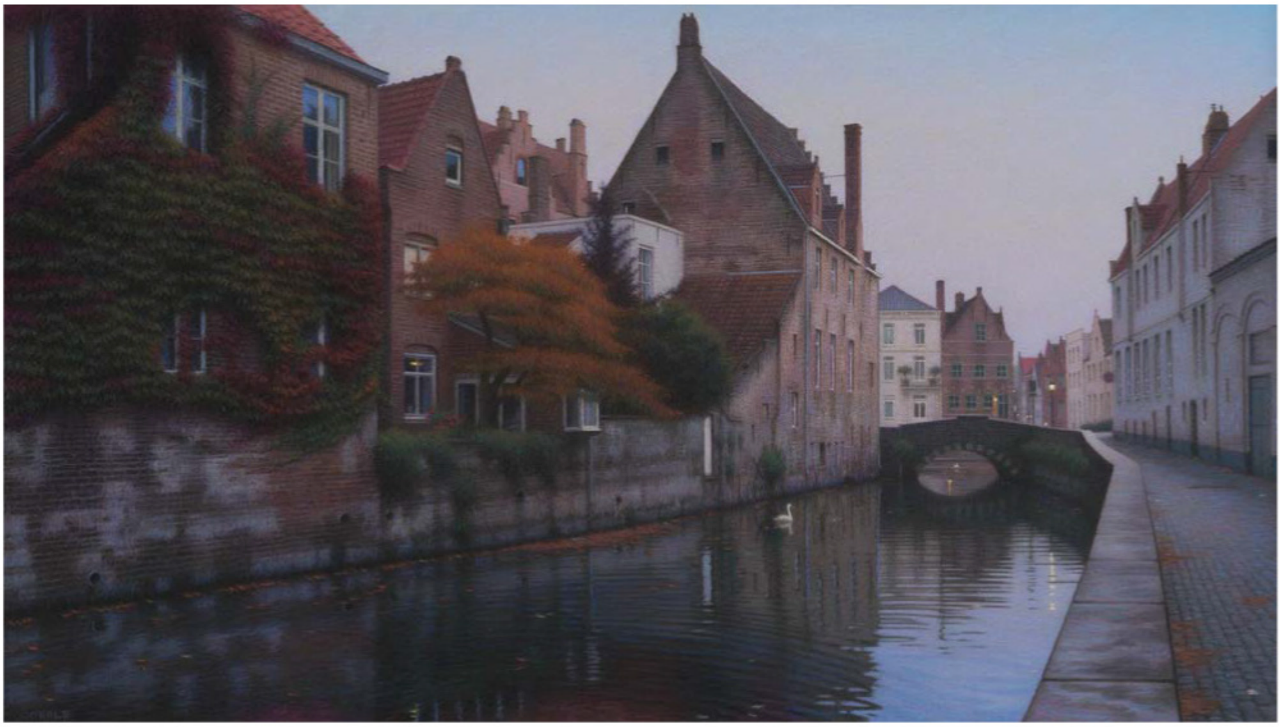
> **"THE RIGHT LIGHT CAN MAKE AN OTHERWISE MUNDANE SCENE SEEM MOMENTARILY MAGICAL."** —BRIAN COBBLE

Moon, Grassy Lake (page 39). The artist masterfully captures an autumn evening in an Arkansas swamp, where the setting sun bathes bald cypress trees in a warm glow, their needles glowing reddish-orange before falling for the winter. He portrays the shift from green to red bathed in warm, glowing light, keeping the edges of the needled branches softly defined throughout the painting to suggest a gently humid atmosphere. A full moon emerges in the midst of the horizon's pink glow that softly transitions to blue. The upper sky casts an enchanting deep blue reflection across the foreground water.

Ever attuned to the fleeting effects of light, Cobble views *Lexington Evening* (page 38) as a prime example of how light can transform an ordinary scene into a visual feast—casting shadows that add drama and an extra layer of geometry to houses and yards. "An otherwise ordinary town becomes, momentarily at least, a beautiful place to be and a springboard for art," he says. Through his perceptive eye and skillful hand, Cobble depicts the delicate spray from a water hose so it's nearly audible, and turns the massive tower into a subject of great beauty.

WINTER'S WONDER

In *Winter Sun* (pages 36-37), Cobble captures the gentle warmth of a late winter morning, with the lower half of the scene still in shadow but softly illuminated by ambient

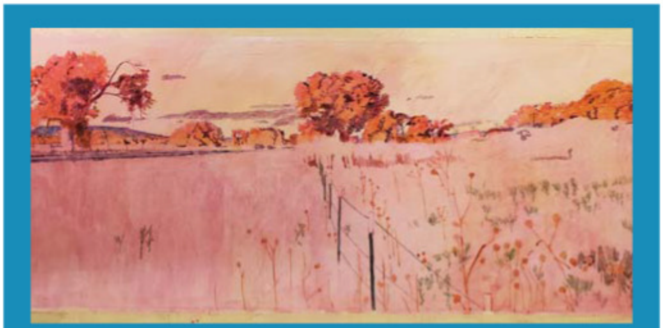


light reflecting off the snow. A thoughtfully placed dog—Cobble's own, named Otto—basks in the sunlight, adding a quiet, inviting presence to the scene.

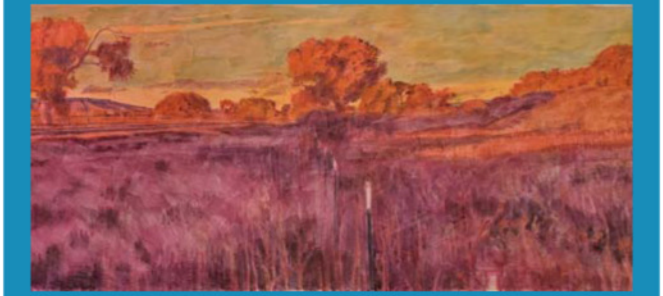
"The painting is inspired by a street in Las Vegas—a northern New Mexico town that's one of my favorite places—and a gold mine for subject matter," Cobble says. "I've photographed this row of buildings for some time, at different times of day and different times of the year. After shuffling around a bunch of these photos for weeks on my wall, I finally came up with the basic elements for this composition. There's a nice rhythm between the sunlight on the buildings and the shadows of the huge elms."

Capturing the quiet softness of a snowy evening, *La Pie* (page 41) features distant Christmas lights that lend a gentle warmth. Its elongated format enhances the scene's dramatic sense of space through both atmospheric and linear perspective. "As in many of my paintings, especially those with Western settings, the format is elongated horizontally in an effort to express the landscape's open spaces," Cobble says. "Although the light and composition are very different, I had Monet's winter masterpiece, *La Pie* [*The Magpie*, page 4], in mind as I worked on this painting. His is a favorite, and I was lucky enough to have seen the actual painting a few years ago."

Bayfield (page 40), a winter scene set in Southwest Colorado, features an even more elongated format to showcase the light and chill of a late afternoon. The sun's glare manages to bleach out the colors, silhouetting objects against sky and field. "The tricky part of this work," Cobble says, "was to make the scene appear both light-filled and cold."



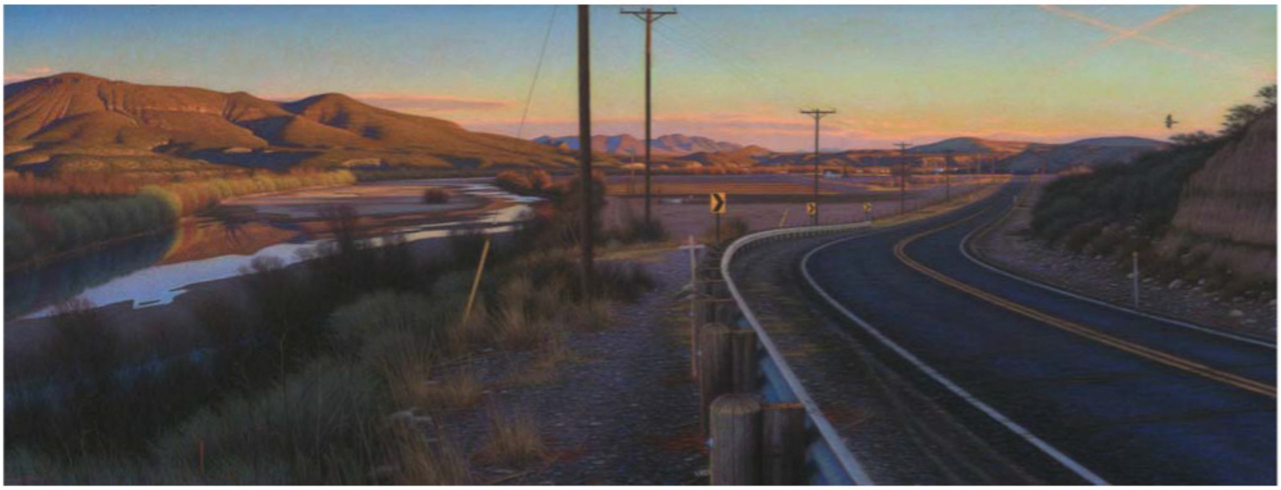
INITIAL WATERCOLOR UNDERPAINTING



COMPLETED WATERCOLOR UNDERPAINTING

WHAT LIES BENEATH

A watercolor underpainting provides a color foundation for the pastel to react to and build upon. I usually apply a reddish or red-violet tone to contrast with the pastel and provide a depth and visual weight to the work. I then apply layer after layer of pastel, more broadly at first and then more carefully as the painting develops. —Brian Cobble



OPPOSITE **Bruges** (pastel on board, 15x32)

ABOVE **Going South** (pastel on board, 15x39)

CONTEMPORARY CONCEPTS

Cobble finds quiet beauty in overlooked corners of the Southwest, often drawn to scenes where the land, light and traces of human presence evoke a deeper sense of place and time. "It all feels wild and lonesome, like a hint of what New Mexico used to be," says Cobble of *Going South* (above), an expansive and serene composition. "This is winter in southern New Mexico. The light is mellower, and the water is low in the river. The low sun adds shadows and mystery to the hills. A gliding bird adds life and movement, while the descanso implies the opposite," he notes.

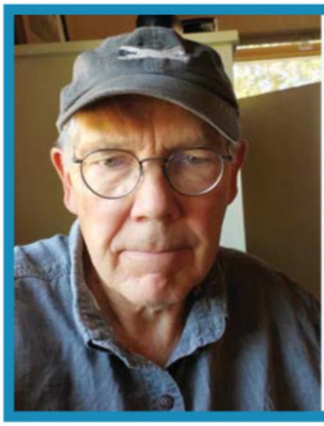
"Reflecting on the balance between realism and modernity, contemporary Realist painter Willard Midgette [American, 1937–78] once told me that he mistrusted artists who walked out of their studios and into the 19th century—meaning that they edited out all signs of modern human activity. Here I depict the road, utility poles and guy wire, signs, and the guardrail bending one way while the Rio bends the other," Cobble says.

Rain, Dona Anas (page 41) depicts a rare occurrence in southern New Mexico: an all-day rain. It's late fall, some of the trees have lost their leaves, the Dona Ana Mountains are disappearing. The weather makes the scene almost monochromatic other than the yellows of the sign and the stand of carrizo cane behind the building. "This probably isn't a vista that would make a person stop and take a long look," says Cobble, "but that kind of rain in the desert is extraordinary to me, at least. In many of my works without human figures, I'm tempted to include animals to add life and movement. In this case, it's a pair of grackles."

As a realist artist, Cobble acknowledges and appreciates the art and techniques of masters of the past and applies that inspiration to his work. Unlike his paintings of the American Southwest, *Bruges* (opposite) captures a tranquil, predawn canal and street in Belgium, bathed in muted colors, a humid atmosphere and soft coastal light. "Because I don't blend my pastels, I achieve the muted colors in the sky and water through multiple layers of color," Cobble says. "Vermeer's stunning paintings of Delft were a constant influence while I worked on my Bruges pieces."

Cobble reflects on his work as a meaningful way to connect with both his art and those who experience it. "Perhaps my painting process is a form of gratitude—a way of thanking art for encouraging me to look longer and feel more deeply," he says. "I hope my work resonates with others and speaks to them in a personal, positive and inspiring way."

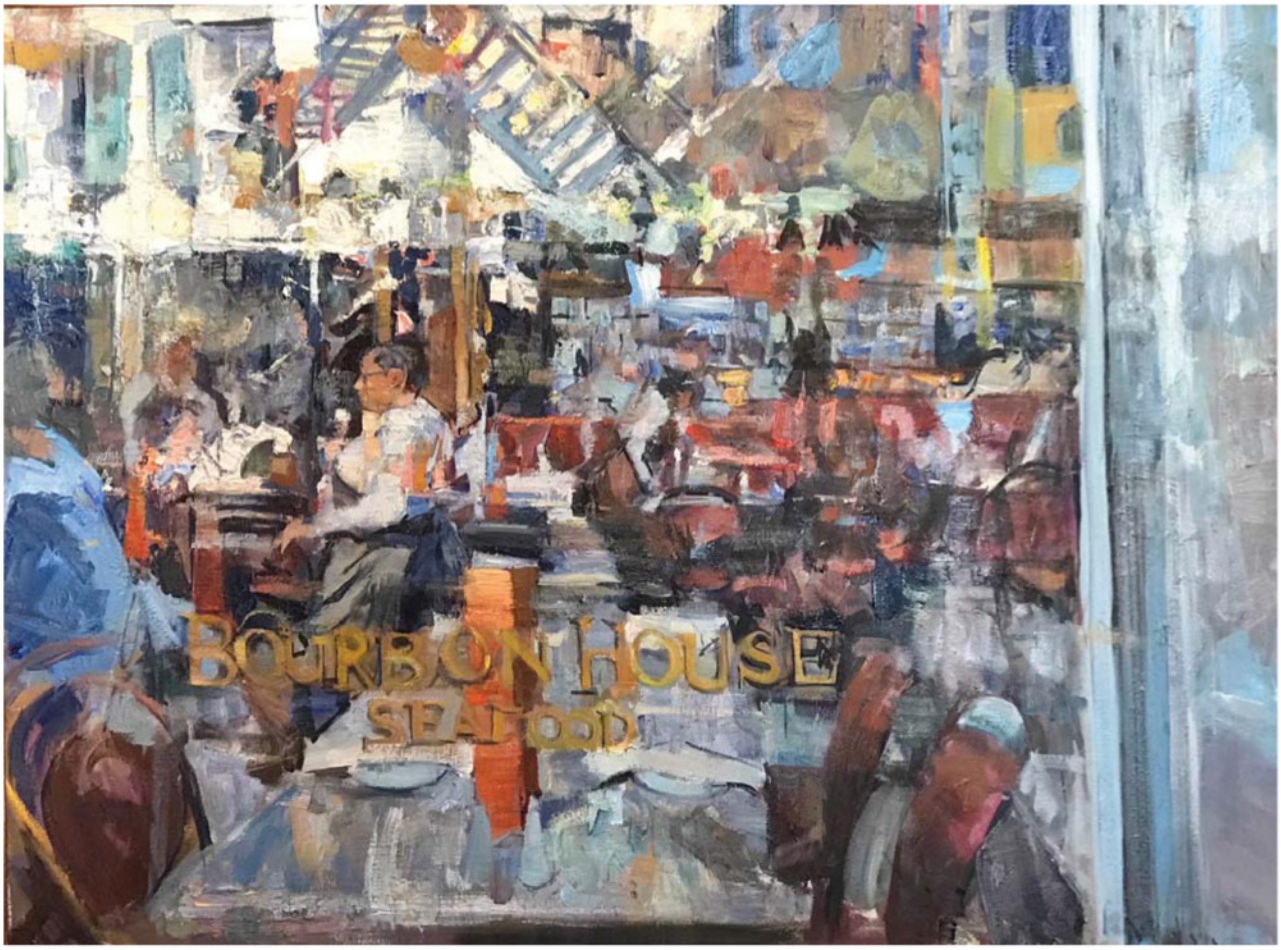
Artist, arts writer and instructor Robert K. Carsten has authored numerous articles on art and artists.



MEET THE ARTIST

While growing up in Las Cruces, N.M., Brian Cobble took painting lessons from a local artist who had studied at the Art Students League. Cobble went on to earn a BFA from New Mexico State University and a MFA from Southern Methodist University. He also attended the Skowhegan School, in Madison, Maine, and was twice a resident at the MacDowell Colony, in Peterborough, N.H. His work is held in numerous private collections, as well as in museums, including the Dallas Museum of Art; the New Mexico Museum of Art, in Santa Fe, N.M.; the El Paso Museum of Art, in El Paso, Texas; the Tyler Museum of Art, in Tyler, Texas; and The Columbus Museum, in Columbus, Ga. He is represented by Valley House Gallery, in Dallas, and Arthur Roger Gallery, in New Orleans. He lives in Albuquerque, N.M., with his wife, Julie, who's a biologist, and their two dogs.

THE ARTIST'S WORK CAN BE VIEWED AT VALLEYHOUSE.COM.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INTENTIONAL VISION

Inspired by light, memory and the quiet drama of everyday life, **Mikael Olson** conjures dreamlike scenes in a variety of media.

By Colleen Smith

When Mikael Olson was 6 years old, he wanted to be either King Kong or an artist. "I think I was scribbling when I was crawling out of my crib," Olson says. "I was attracted to the magic of making marks and altering space." For many, the goal of becoming a successful artist feels almost as improbable as growing up to be a giant gorilla monster, but Olson, now 52, has accomplished at least one of his childhood dreams—making his living as a painter.

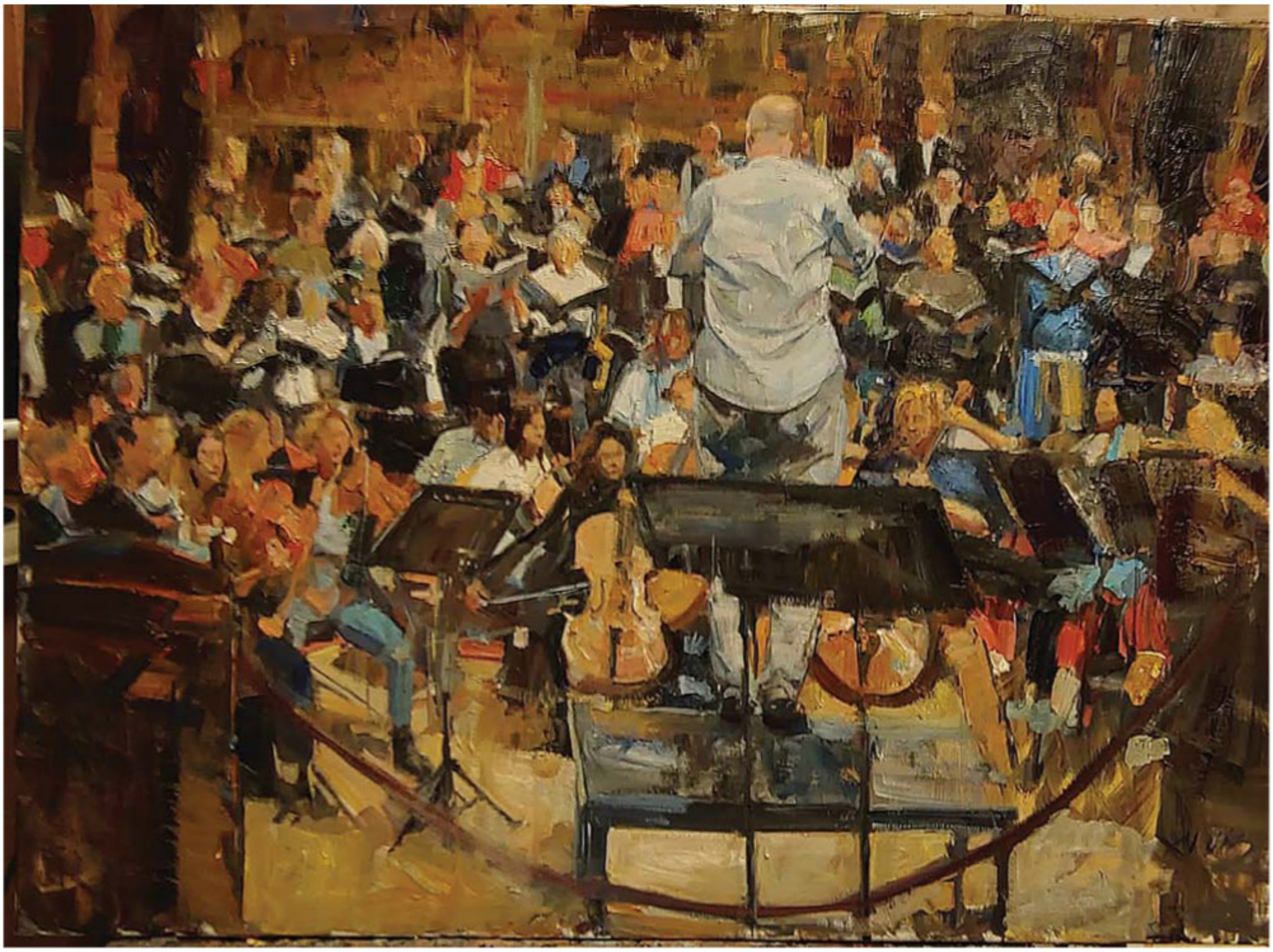
To his fellow artists, his teachers, gallerists and collectors, Olson's mammoth talent is evident. The emotional power and sense of atmosphere in his paintings set them apart in a crowded field of contemporary talent, and he continues to produce next-level works at the fulcrum of representation and abstraction.

A STUDIO SNAPSHOT

In a conversation at his downtown Denver studio, Olson notes that the historic 1890s building originally served as the Southwest Telegraph and Telephone Company. The artist's third-floor studio space is heady with the alchemy of a painter's potions. A window provides a view to the west toward the foothills where he grew up, in the small town of Evergreen, Colo. Olson's father—an architect and beekeeper—designed his family's honeycomb-inspired hexagonal home. His mother is also an artist who primarily focuses on sculpture.

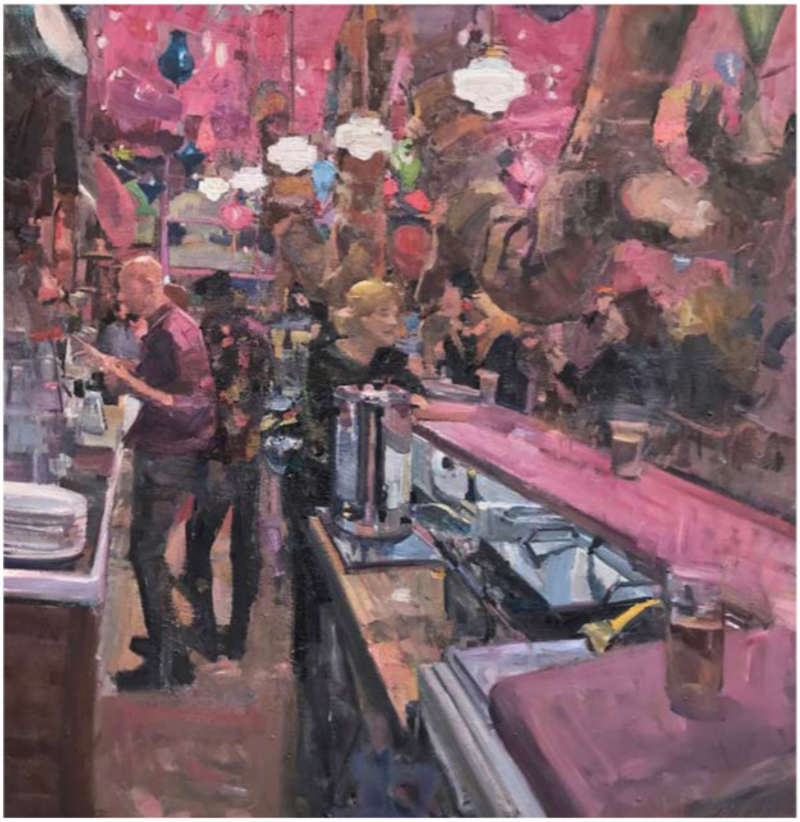
Olson's studio is seeped in Mile High City art history. The celebrated Denver painter Mitch Caster once worked there. Gracing the space are watercolor paper tablets and a pencil box from the estate of the late, nationally recognized landscape painter Joellyn Duesberry. And the inside of the studio door is covered with quotes handwritten in indelible marker by various local artists, including one Olson jotted from comedian Steven Wright: *It's a small world, but I wouldn't want to paint it.*

Painting, though, is Olson's undeniable passion. "I'm usually painting every day," he says. The artist often



OPPOSITE **Gumbo** (oil on canvas, 30x40)

ABOVE **Orchestra** (oil on canvas, 30x40)

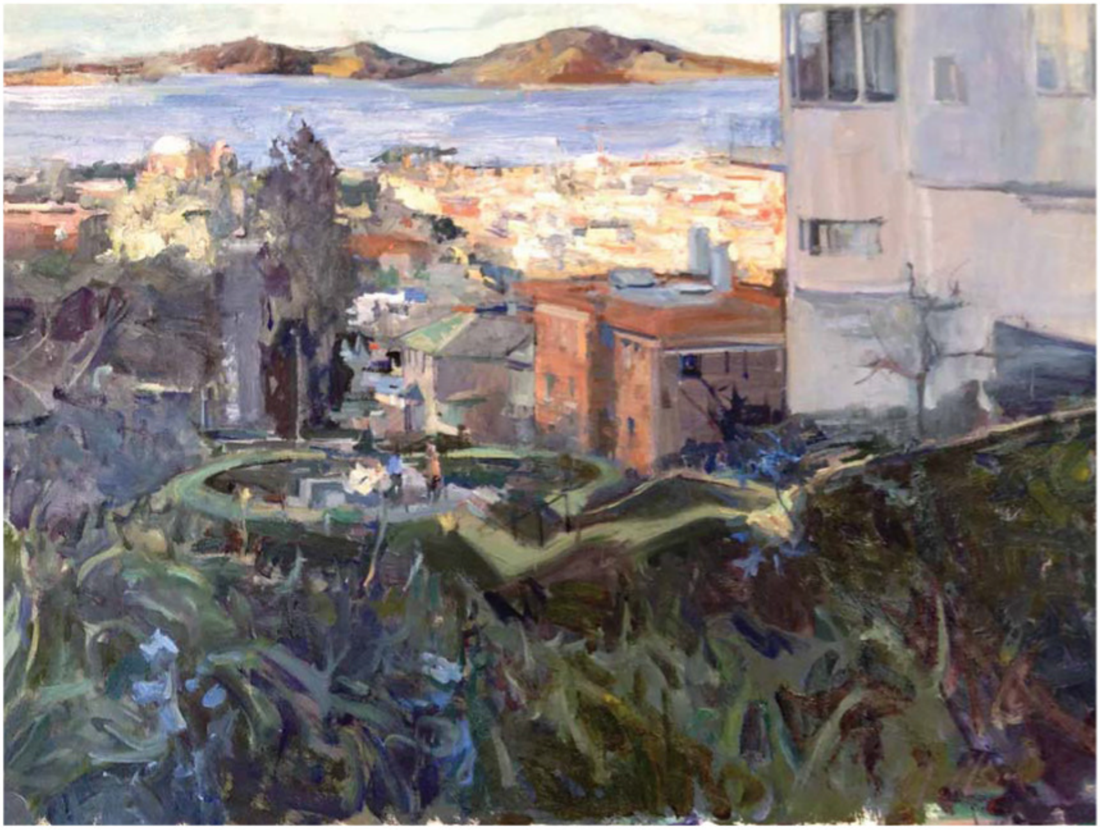


paints from life in coffee shops and bars, or en plein air. As he paints, he evolves. His devotion rewards him with works constantly improving, each painting progressing beyond the previous one. With "the world" as his subject, even a crowded bar, like the one depicted in *New Year* (left), appears enchanted.

In the artist's studio, dozens of unframed paintings, rich with light and mood, lean against a wall. There are also piles of watercolor works on paper and sketchbooks full of ink and charcoal drawings. Olson's playful and spontaneous tinkering in other media obviously bolsters his painting skills, and while his paintings are recognizable for their dreamlike quality—with scenes featuring ghostly figures leaning into abstraction— his drawing background consistently resurfaces.

THE PATH TO PAINTING

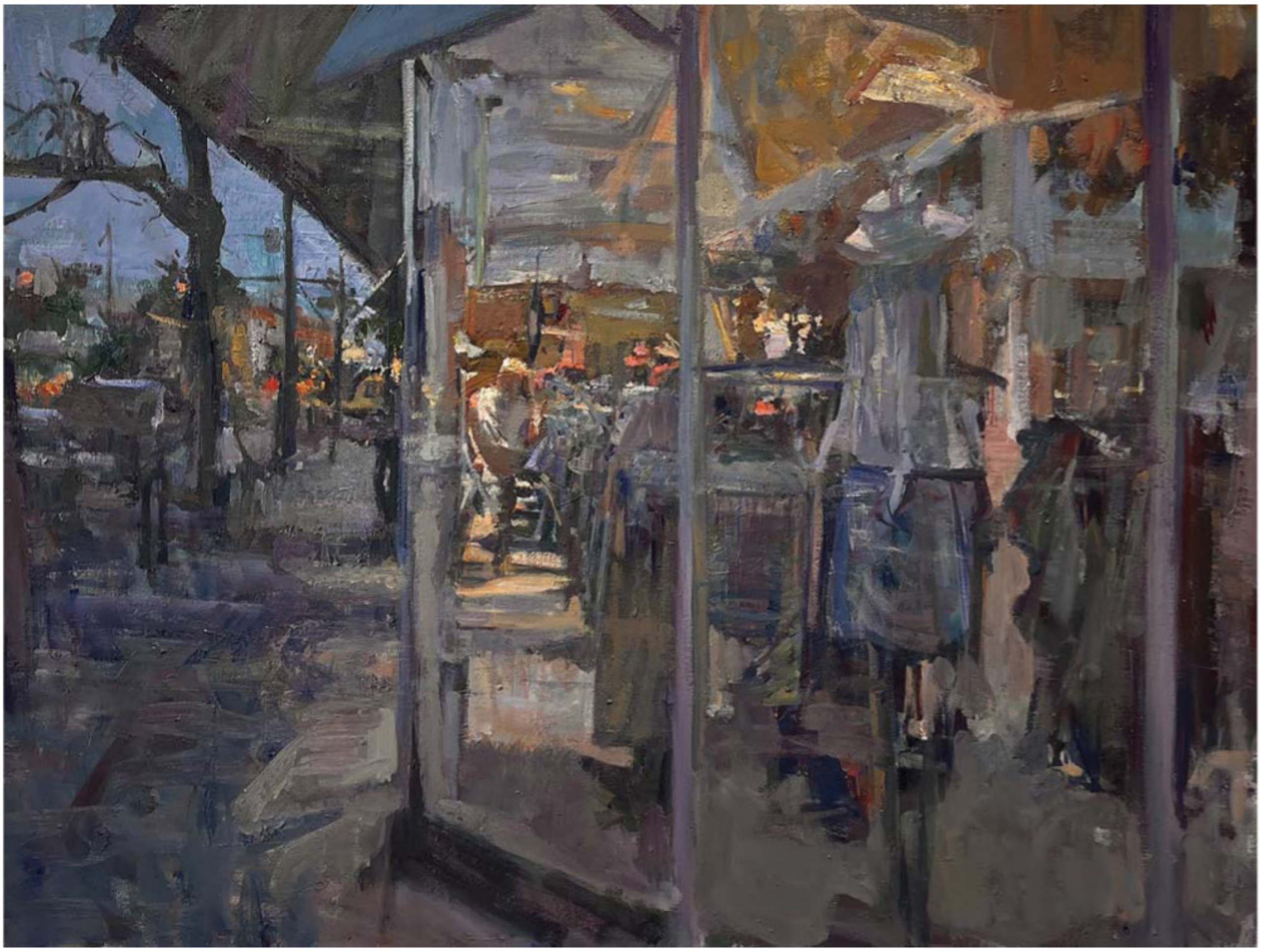
The artist originally set his sights on becoming a cartoonist. "I loved *Garfield* by Jim Davis and *Calvin and Hobbes* by Bill Watterson," he says. "I did a lot of sketching and observational caricatures.



TOP
New Year
(oil on canvas, 48x48)

LEFT
San Francisco, Lombard Street
(oil on canvas, 30x40)

OPPOSITE
Paradox
(oil on canvas, 30x40)



A FRESH PERSPECTIVE

Mikael Olson has taught gestural drawing and painting at the Art Students League of Denver, off and on, for the past nine years. He remains a student himself, saying, “I reinform my process of learning by starting from scratch. I try to stay in the state of mind of a beginner—like a Zen thing.” The following are a few suggestions Olson offers for fostering creative growth and discovery.

Step out of your comfort zone. Tap into your gut where intention and expression meet.

Be open to seeing more. If you’re jaded and think you know, you’re going to miss out. Investigate and marvel.

Be spontaneous with your paint application. I don’t plan much.

Evaluate and revise. Slight adjustments can make a world of difference.

Improvise. I’m “catch as catch can,” working with whatever I can get my hands on.

Start with a warm-up exercise. I paint with watercolor as a way to loosen up my creative muscles. A short pose—up to 20 minutes—is another great way to loosen up and discover new ways of mark-making. Short poses have a closer connection to real life and are less staged.

Try new media. Using new media is a good way to crosstrain the brain and transfer skills across multiple media. (See Sometimes Oil & Water Do Mix, page 49.)

Try a painting using no white. It’s liberating.

I drew faces all through junior high and high school. I'd skip class to go to the library and draw faces."

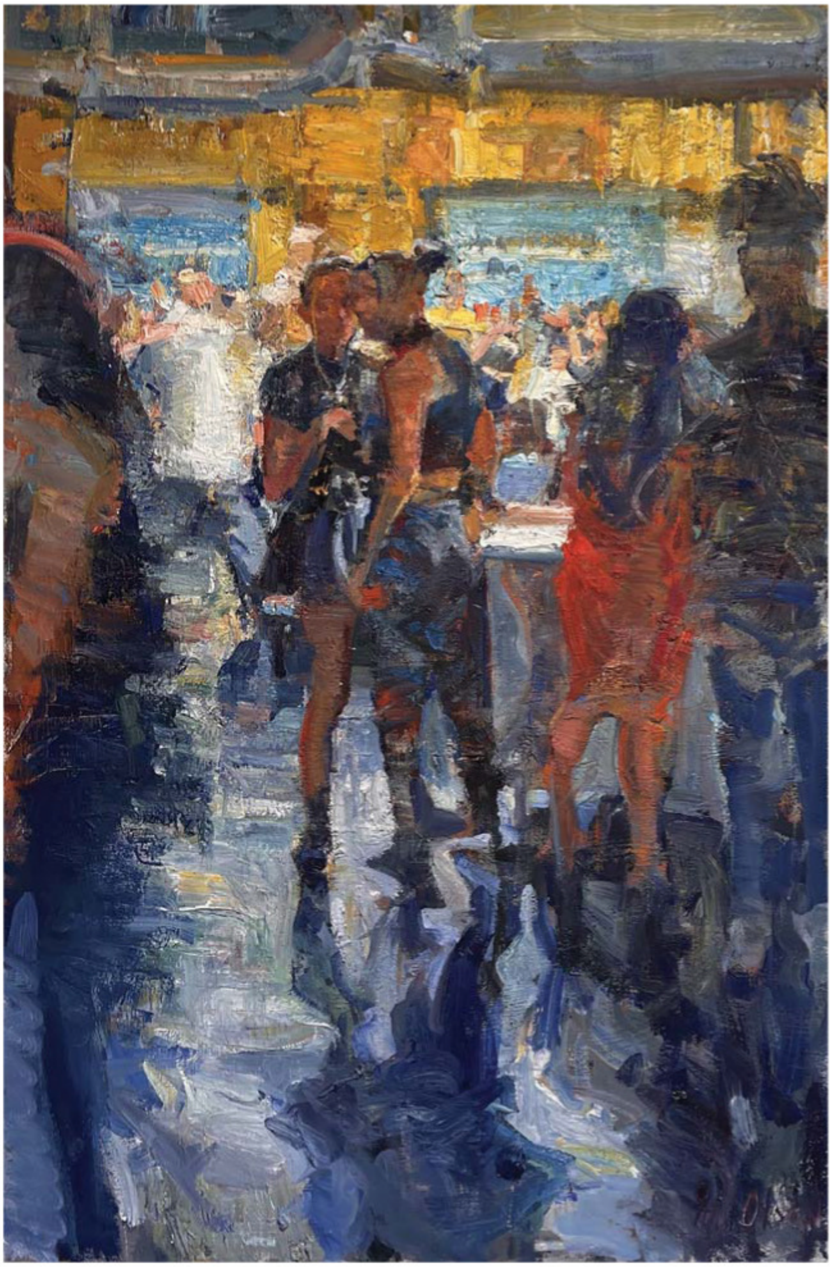
Although his cartooning days and those stolen hours sketching faces clearly bore fruit, Olson often paints figures with minimal facial detail. The humans peopling his artwork linger over coffee or cocktails. They read or play chess or lean into conversations in cafés and bars. They stroll streets or ride bicycles, but the artist respects their privacy. Even as he closely observes his subjects, he renders them without stealing their identity. He shows shapes more than details and delights with color and light more than photorealistic impressions.

That's not to say Olson takes the easy route. Quite the contrary. He doesn't shy away from taking on complex compositions. "I make difficult choices," he says. "I like to paint stuff that's hard to paint—like nocturne scenes, for instance. I'm intrigued by the dusk and the transition from day to night, when electric lights come on. I'm paying attention to what light does at different times of day."

He's also paying attention to the big picture along with the close-up. "I'm learning that a painting has two stories—the story that grabs your attention from across the room, and the story that becomes more clear when you get up close and find those little nuggets, subtle shapes and small details that read as graphic abstraction from a distance," he says.

Of late, Olson has been drawn to painting compositions as seen through windows. "Glass isn't completely transparent," he says. "Depending on the angle of light, there are reflections that show what's behind you, and there's a difference between transparency and shadows."

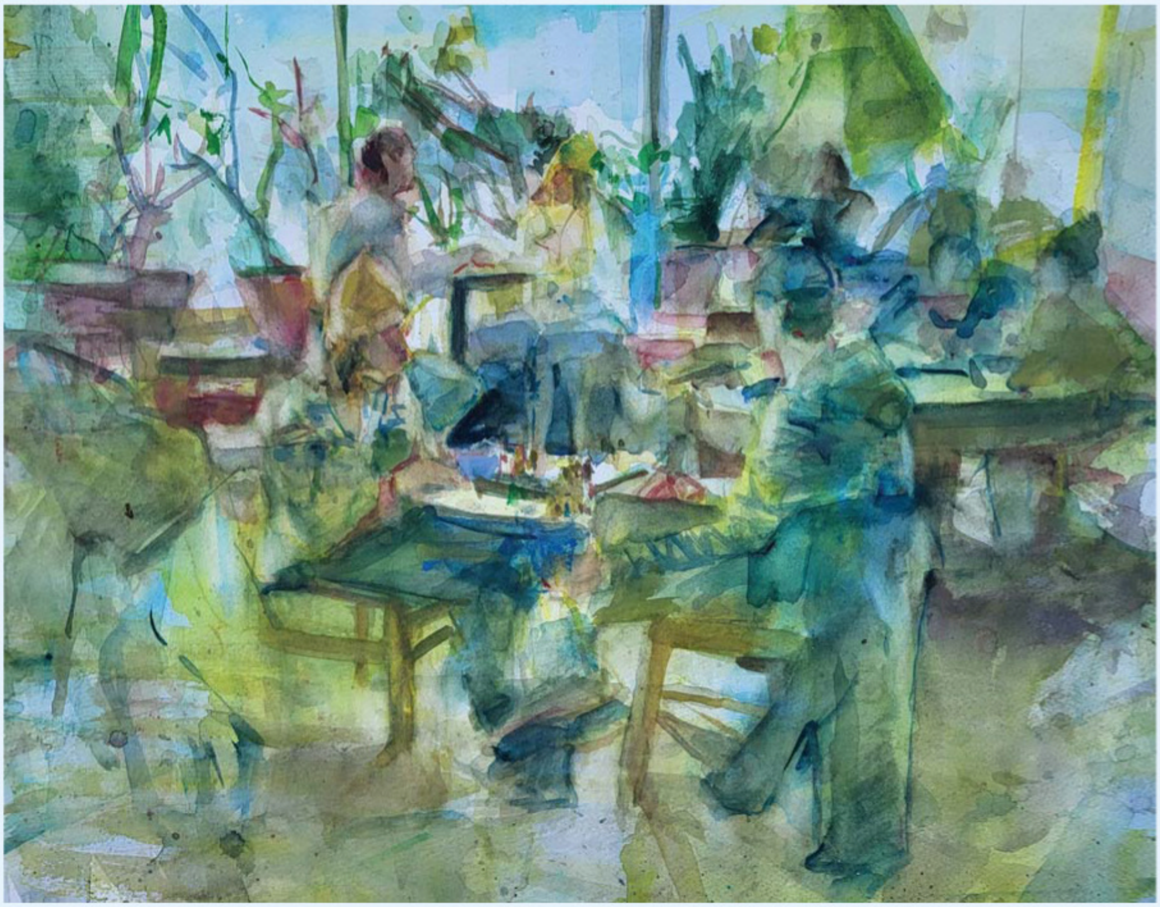
What interests the artist above all is gestural painting, also known as action painting. His expression finds form from brushstrokes, free-flowing and spontaneous. The physical act of painting contains emotion. "I love how a paintbrush is an extension of the artist's limb," he says.



Gossip
(oil on canvas, 36x24)

"I'M LEARNING THAT A PAINTING HAS TWO STORIES—THE STORY THAT GRABS YOUR ATTENTION FROM ACROSS THE ROOM, AND THE STORY THAT BECOMES MORE CLEAR WHEN YOU GET UP CLOSE …"

—MIKAEL OLSON



Morning Light (watercolor on paper, 14x19)

SOMETIMES OIL & WATER DO MIX

Mikael Olson works both in oil and watercolor. Though he approaches each medium differently, he recognizes that one informs the other. “So many painters today have an aversion to watercolor, though it was a popular medium for artists hundreds of years ago,” he says.

Watercolor pragmatically simplifies the artist’s painting-from-life sessions. “It’s an easier setup,” he says. “I’m notoriously known to be a messy person. I used to have a paintbox and would paint in public places, but watercolor is much more portable, especially because I mostly commute by bike.”

Although working in watercolor forces Olson to adjust his approach, he says the medium has helped him hone his technique. “Before, I never bothered with technique; it was more a philosophy on how to look at things,” he says. “For example, in layering paint, you can build up watercolor slowly. You can do that with oil paint as well, but with watercolor everything is more connected.”

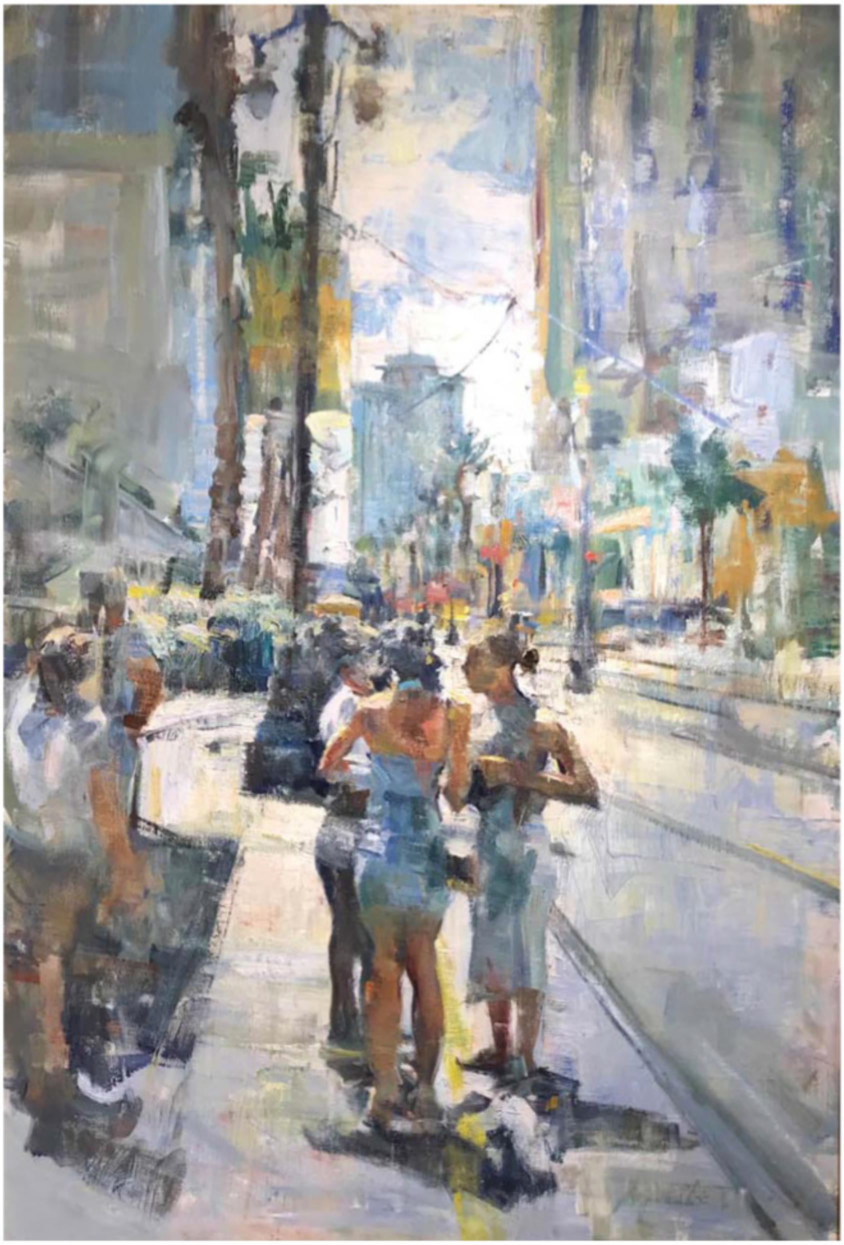
The connection, for Olson, is more fluid and more evocative. “The water is another element,” he says. “I have a relationship with the water that ebbs and flows with the handling, the touch. I have an increasing sensitivity with watercolor, and meditation helps inform that. I’ve had a lot of experiences that dealt with water, so it makes sense in my imaginative life, my inner world and my dreams—and those inform me in depth.”

Olson recalls a haunting, watery childhood memory of looking down at a small blue truck sunk in a Canadian lake. “It was magical, all those layers,” he says. “I cried when the truck was pulled out of the water. It was a changed state.”

For Olson, trying his hand at watercolor involves surrender even as it rewards with painterly surprises. “Watercolor helps me get more colorful, make colorful shadows and add luminosity,” he says. “And it has changed how I glaze my paintings.”

Moving between oil and water keeps the artist fresh and attuned. “Watercolor gives me more awareness of handling of materials,” he says, “and with oil paint, you can be very heavy-handed and expressive. Watercolor is now starting to inform my oil painting in a way—I’m leaving marks and letting marks stay where they’re at. I’m not overthinking.”

As for what Olson thinks about the intricate results his gestural paintings gain from watercolor, he says, “From the nuance of a watercolor brush to the saturation of a broad transparent wash,I lead with a twist of the wrist. The more I trust my watercolors, the richer and deeper they are.”



LEFT
Waiting for a Streetcar
(oil on canvas, 36x24)

OPPOSITE
Zip Zoom Zoey
(oil on canvas, 24x36)

GALLERY INSIDER

Olson is represented in Colorado by Vail International Gallery, co-owned by Maria and Marc LeVarn and Maria's brother, Patrick Cassidy. The gallery opened in the tiny ski resort town, in 2005, and a few years later started taking in paintings by Olson.

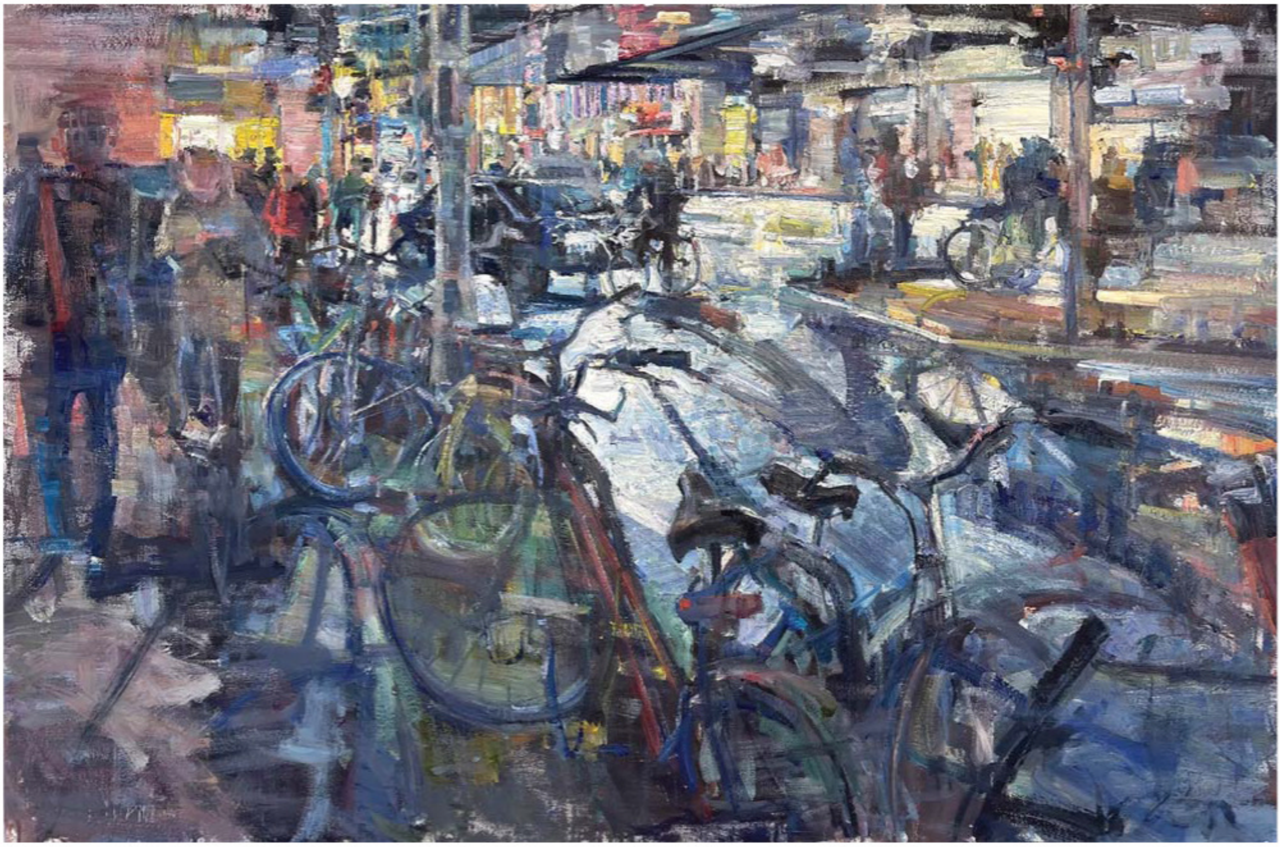
"Mikael's work was an instant fit with our gallery and collectors," says Cassidy. "He's an impressionist, which is a timeless style, but his works have a loose, contemporary feel—many times verging on abstraction. The overall look captures not only a sense of place, but motion as well, making his work dynamic and energetic."

While Cassidy recognizes the contemporary realism and influence of The Denver School of painters, he also notes the singular quality of Olson's art. "His paintings show a uniqueness that is all Mikael," Cassidy continues. "He has an eye for impromptu, slice-of-life compositions that put you in a particular place in the world. It's as if you're walking along with him, drenched in light and shadows. In a cityscape by Mikael, you can almost hear the cars, the sounds of pedestrians, the echoes of the city. In a restaurant or bar scene, you can almost hear the conversations."

In Denver, Olson is represented by Gallery 1261. In March 2024, the gallery hung a solo show of the artist's paintings, which seem to grow in power when presented as an ensemble. Among the artist's fans are other Mile High City painters. "Mikael is a true artist's artist, respected and admired by many of us who see and envy how accomplished his paintings are," says Clyde Steadman, a painter peer based in Denver. "At his show, lots of people came to look, learn and enjoy—and the viewers were artists, not collectors. We look at his work and are blown away by a complete mastery of shape, color and value. He always seems to have just a little bit of perfect drawing in a painting that's otherwise completely free and loose."

Lorenzo Chavez, a Denver-based landscape painter, has collected half a dozen of Olson's works: studies, oils and drawings. "When I first saw Mikael's art, I knew this artist was unique in the way he saw the world and was dedicated to his craft," says Chavez. "I feel that he's one of the best artists in the Denver area today."

Like Olson, Chavez toggles between media, and he points to Olson's versatility in oil and watercolor as well as his refined drawing skills. "His mastery of drawing and his unique way of conveying a subject are so interesting," Chavez says.



EVER EVOLVING

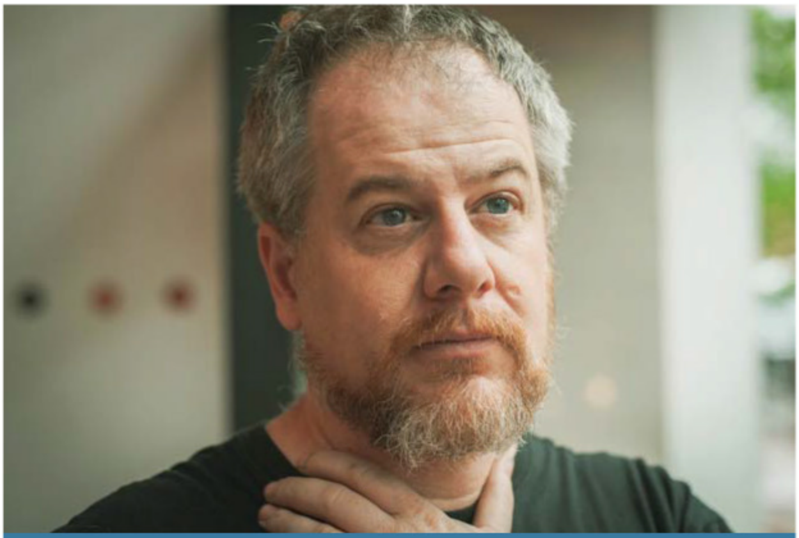
A lot of people call Olson an impressionist but, “Impressionism is situational,” says the artist. “If you’re in a dark room painting, you’re painting the environment in that room. If you render everything too crisp, you lose that mystery. When it really works, I want people to investigate, to get closer to a painting. Ultimately, I want my painting to be entertaining.”

As for himself, Olson remains entertained by painting, ever challenged, ever improving. “I’m never content,” he says. “Contentment would be an illusion. Mastery is up to somebody else.”

He admits, too, the realities of self-doubt. “Sometimes, I’m like a sailboat with no wind, drifting and discouraged,” Olson says. “It’s very frustrating at times, but I think I’ve kept my natural inclinations.”

As our conversation came to a close, the artist alluded to a pivotal scene from Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice*. “The gist is that you get what you deserve. You have to give and hazard all you have,” he says. “I return to that all the time. It’s dangerous, and it’s powerful.”

Colleen Smith is a Denver-based author, journalist, multimedia creative director and screenwriter.



MEET THE ARTIST

Mikael Olson graduated from the Rocky Mountain College of Art and Design, then continued to hone his craft through studies at the Art Students League of Denver. He has worked alongside such prominent painters as Quang Ho and Kevin Wechbach and includes among his influences such diverse talents as Andrew Wyeth and Richard Diebenkorn. His painting style, which he describes as “impressionistic toward slightly expressionistic,” is beautifully suited to the subjects he prefers: single objects in bold still life, human figures thoughtfully composed and cleanly rendered, and light-infused street scenes.

▶ VISIT MIKAELOLSON.COM TO LEARN MORE.

EMERGING VOICES

We're delighted to spotlight 15 rising artists whose exceptional work earned top honors in the **4TH ANNUAL ARTISTS TO WATCH ART COMPETITION**. This inspiring group reminds us that artistic talent transcends age, style and subject. Congratulations to the 2025 winners! **COMPILED BY BETH WILLIAMS**

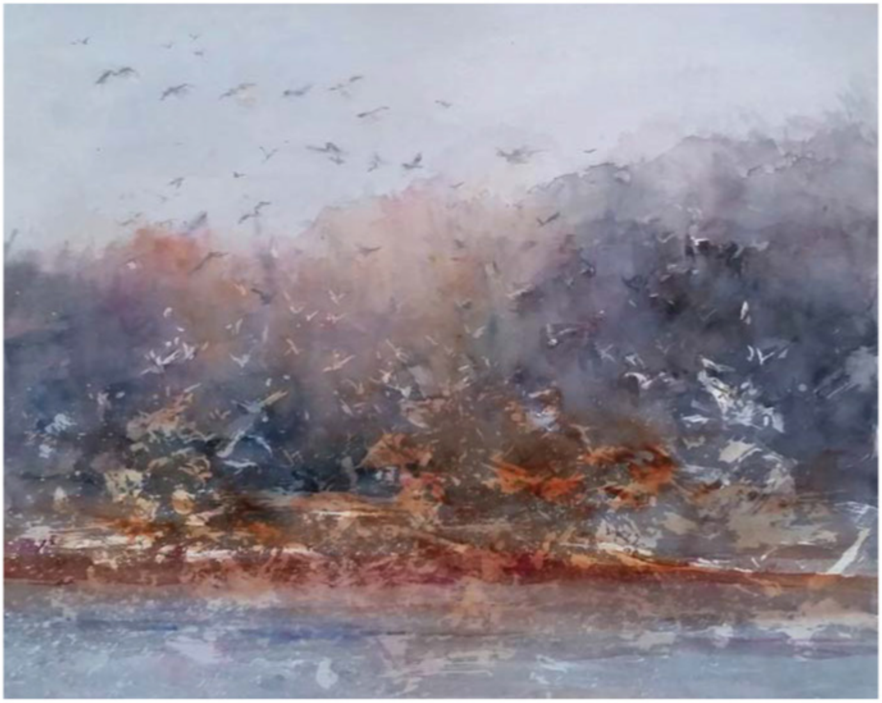
Abstract / Experimental

FIRST PLACE

Rose Sinatra

Toms River, New Jersey

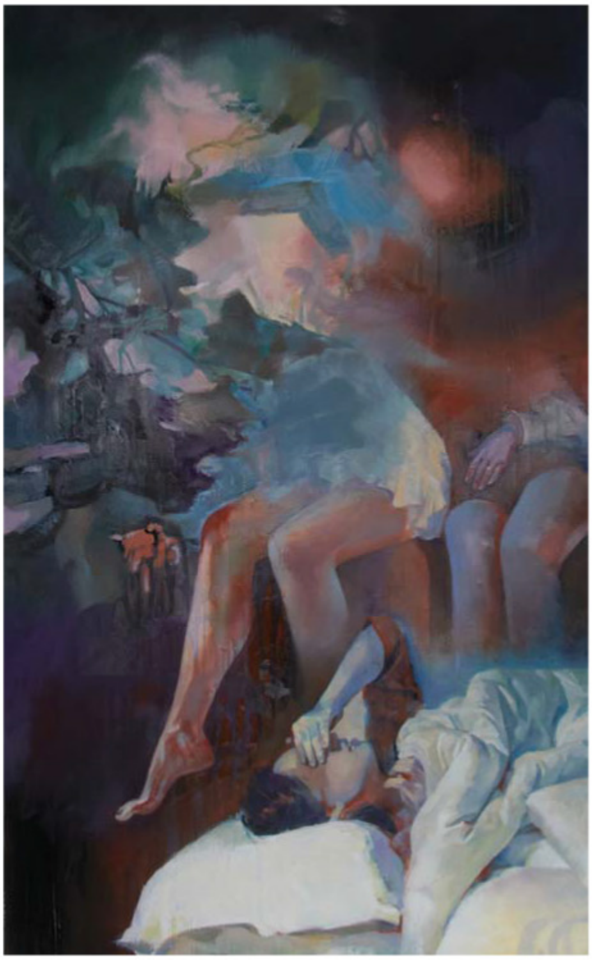
Ascension (watercolor on paper, 15x18)



Throughout the years, I constantly studied how to improve my art—first as a student, then as an instructor. While searching for guidance on how to "build" a better painting, I came across a document on the principles of design—a guideline of key qualities that are essential to a good painting. I try to keep these suggestions in mind when planning a composition.

I believe *Ascension* incorporates some of the principles—such as unity, pattern, movement and a limited palette—that contribute to a strong design.

ABOUT ME I began as a self-taught oil painter, but when I saw someone paint a gem of a watercolor, I was hooked. I sought teachers for instruction and guidance, and I believe that they've had the most impact on my work. Of equal impact was studying countless art instruction books. Eventually, I became an art instructor, and am surprised and inspired by how much I've learned from my students.



SECOND PLACE
Ruobing Liao

Burlington, Ontario, Canada

Her Nightmare (oil on canvas, 5x3 feet)

This painting is part of my "Dream" series, in which each piece explores subconscious emotions using partially abstract, partially figurative human forms to represent psychological states in dreams.

I used layers of black, shifting light and texture to show the pressure of being judged by one's own inner desires. The painting's foreground, midground and background represent different psychological dimensions, with higher areas becoming more abstract and ephemeral.

I believe that paintings speak their own language. My intended meaning isn't the most important; the viewer's emotional response is.

ABOUT ME Both of my parents work in art-related fields, so I began formal training in drawing at the age of 5. Later, I studied illustration at Sheridan College, in Toronto.

THIRD PLACE
Doreen Wulbrecht

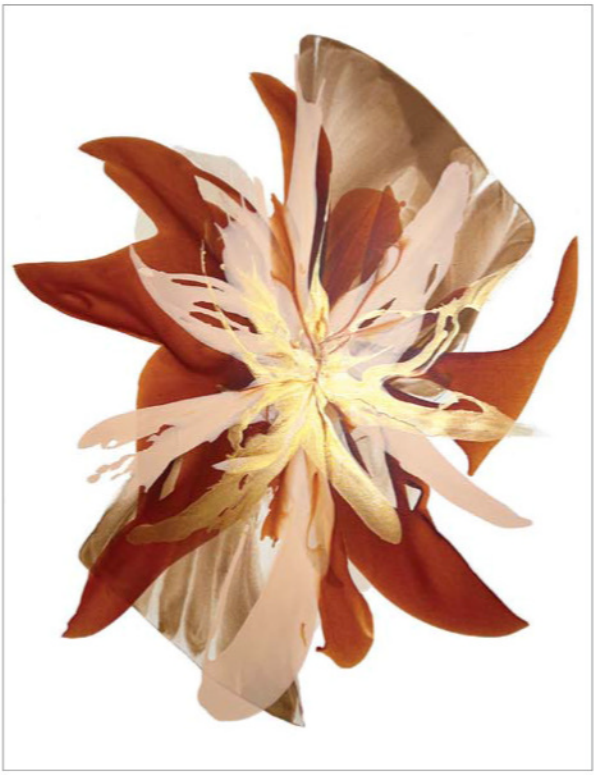
Irvine, California

Star Seed (acrylic on canvas, 64x50)

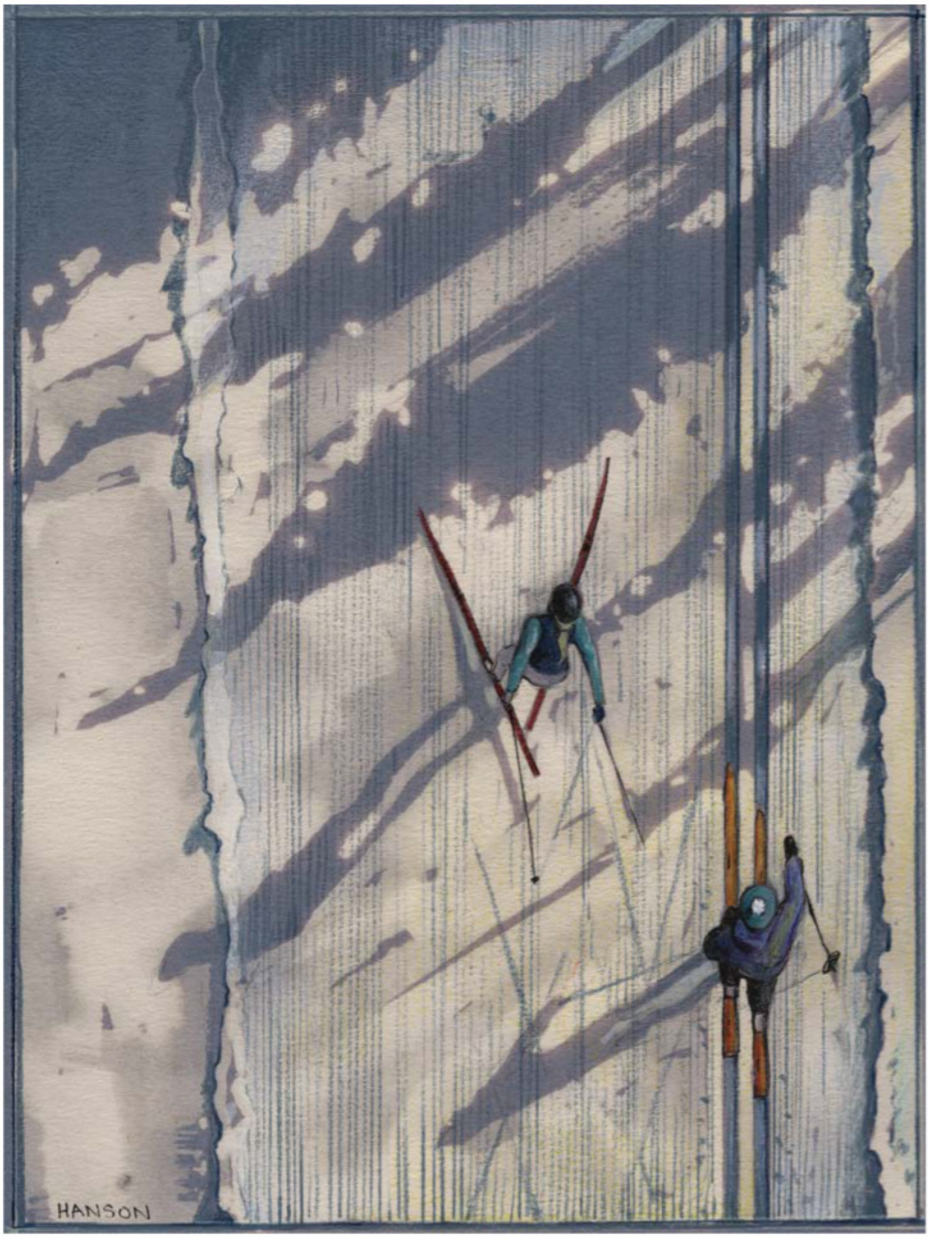
I love bold, beautiful color and wanted to see if I could portray that same feeling of intensity using an earth-tone palette. I poured each layer of paint toward the middle of the canvas and removed any excess with, of all things, a turkey baster! I let each layer dry, applying four different colors, one after another.

Because I love a "wow" factor, I used a beautiful metallic gold paint as the last layer. It highlights the central area and gives the painting a radiant focal point. And so, *Star Seed* named itself.

ABOUT ME I wasn't clear on how to make a living from art upon graduating with bachelor's degrees in fine art and science, so I went into business. I did art on the side and was helped along the way by many instructors. An early retirement from the corporate world finally gave me the opportunity to focus on my art full time.



Landscape | Cityscape



ABOUT ME

I received a B.A. in environmental design and a MFA in architecture from Montana State University. I'm a practicing architect focused on custom homes centered on energy efficiency, sense of place and building science. I'm also an illustrator and have been creating art since I was a child.

FIRST PLACE

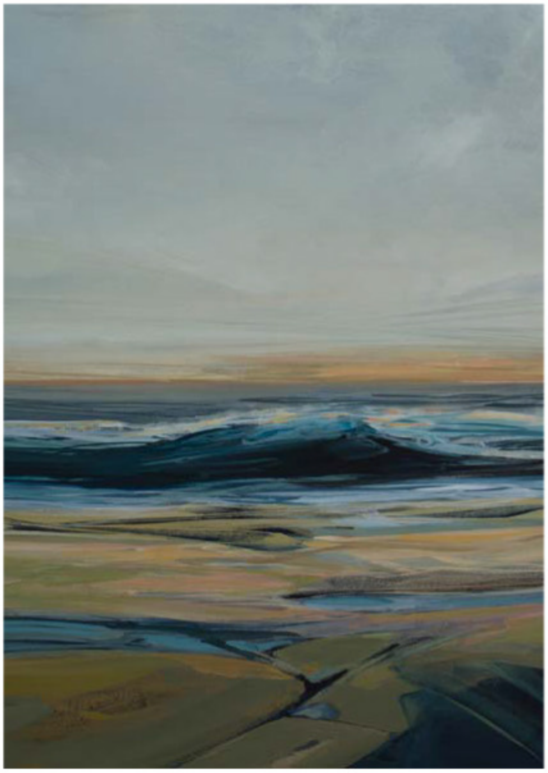
Meghan Hanson

Stevensville, Montana

Winter From Above, Passing Lane (bleach, pen and colored pencil on paper, 8x6)

I'm fascinated with exploring our—my—place within our larger world, and I do this through creating art that examines it. My art draws inspiration from both the natural world and the man-made.

I started *Winter From Above, Passing Lane* after studying the shadows of trees on snow during late-afternoon cross-country skiing in the Tetons, where I used to live but continue to work and play. To create this painting—part of my "From Above" series—I used bleach, colored pencil and pen. Shadows were made first by painting the areas in sunlight with bleach. This had to be done quickly, as the bleach ate away the tiny paintbrush hairs fast! The bleach took differently on the paper, creating a modeled depth. Once dry, I went over it with colored pencil and ink pen to create the image.



SECOND PLACE

Linda Wooters

Newport Beach, California

California Tide Pools (acrylic on canvas, 30x24)

California Tide Pools was inspired by my love of the ocean. As a child, I remember taking day trips to the beach and being in awe of the little pools filled with sea life. As an adult living in Newport Beach, Calif., the local tide pools have provided countless hours of entertainment for my family.

In this painting, I focused on the calm of the tide pools—the green moss-covered rocks and the blue pools filled with sea water in the foreground. The warm light captures the end of the day. In the middle ground, a soft wave rolls toward shore, hinting that the tide will soon reclaim the pools. The setting sun in the background indicates the day is almost done. I work abstractly in the hope that it brings viewers a personal memory of a time and place that's uniquely their own.

ABOUT ME My artistic journey began with a degree in art from Long Beach State University. After graduation, I was a visual merchandiser and graphic designer before embracing motherhood full time. During those years, I nurtured my creativity in various ways before pursuing my lifelong dream of becoming a full-time painter.

THIRD PLACE

Tim Wilson

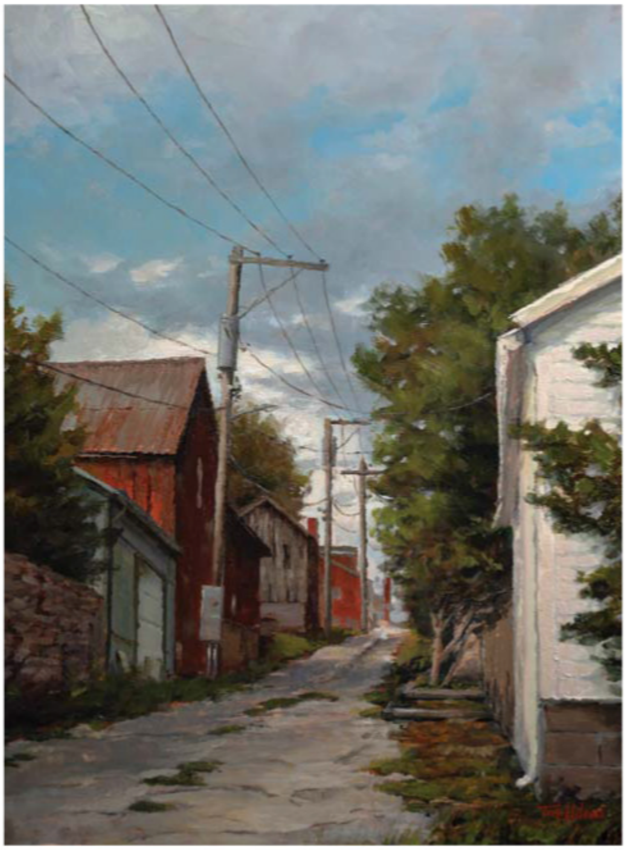
St. Charles, Missouri

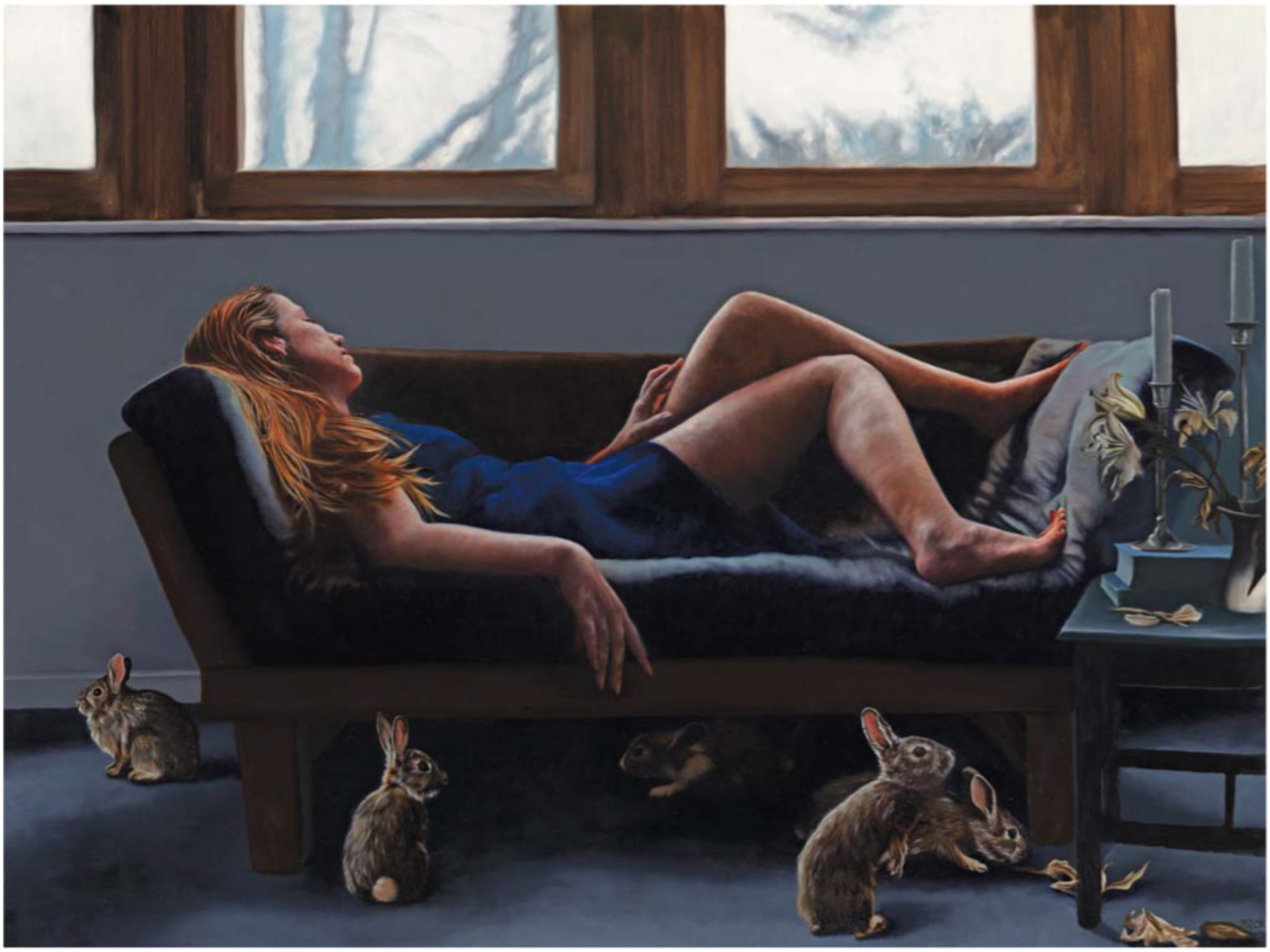
Beautiful Chaos (acrylic on panel, 12x9)

I've always been fascinated with the fine line between "run-down" and "charming." Why is it that one of our favorite restaurants or coffeehouses might be a hodgepodge of bad decor, but just feels "right"? Something magical happens with the passage of time. That's why I titled this painting *Beautiful Chaos*. In isolation, the various elements of this small-town alleyway might seem worn down or decayed, yet together they evoke a sense of belonging. Beauty can be found anywhere.

When I paint, I want to capture the feeling I had in the moment. Composition, lighting and colors are all important, but there's an emotional element to any work that's almost impossible to manufacture. When you find it, you need to recognize it and try your best to recreate it.

ABOUT ME I took a handful of art classes, but I'm 90 percent self-taught. By studying the works of artists I admire, like Robert Bateman and Richard Schmid, I've learned most of what I know now. My life has been a 40-year journey to use my God-given talent the way I do now.





FIRST PLACE

Nicole Beck

Colorado Springs, Colorado

Pietà (oil on panel, 30x40)

Over the past year, I've been drawn to paintings depicting The Descent From the Cross, particularly the altarpiece by Rogier van der Weyden (Netherlandish, 1399–1464). In that work, Mary's pose mirrors that of Christ, visually linking her to his suffering.

Inspired by this concept, I created this "death" painting by placing a feminine Marian figure in a pose reminiscent of Christ in Michelangelo's *Pietà*, in St. Peter's Basilica. While rabbits appear as symbols of resurrection, this painting captures the moment before hope—connecting the feminine experience to universal themes of suffering and sacrifice.

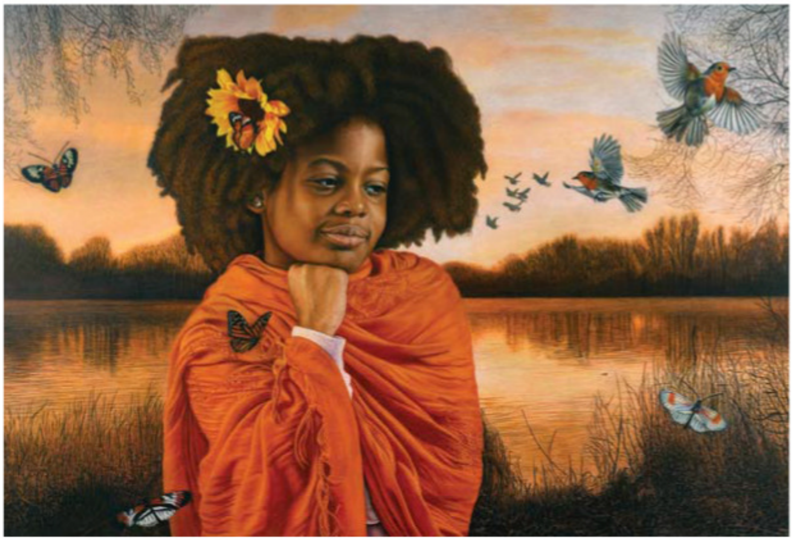
ABOUT ME I received my formal art education at Mississippi State University, where I earned a studio art minor alongside a degree in microbiology. My foundational training was shaped primarily under the guidance of Brent Funderburk, a renowned watercolorist. Since then, I've continued to develop my skills through a combination of workshops, mentorships and committed studio practice.

SECOND PLACE

Galal Ramadan

Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Dreamer's Realm (colored pencil on drafting film mounted on board, 20x30)



Inspired by a memorable meeting with the model, *Dreamer's Realm* seeks to capture a unique blend of vibrant colors and a serene connection to nature. The painting is rich in symbolism: The young girl's calm contemplation and gentle expression envision a happier future; the robins represent new growth and renewal; and the butterflies symbolize transformation, hope and rebirth. Similarly, the sunflowers convey warmth, positivity, prosperity and spiritual enlightenment, while the sunrise signals a fresh start—leaving the past behind and embracing what lies ahead.

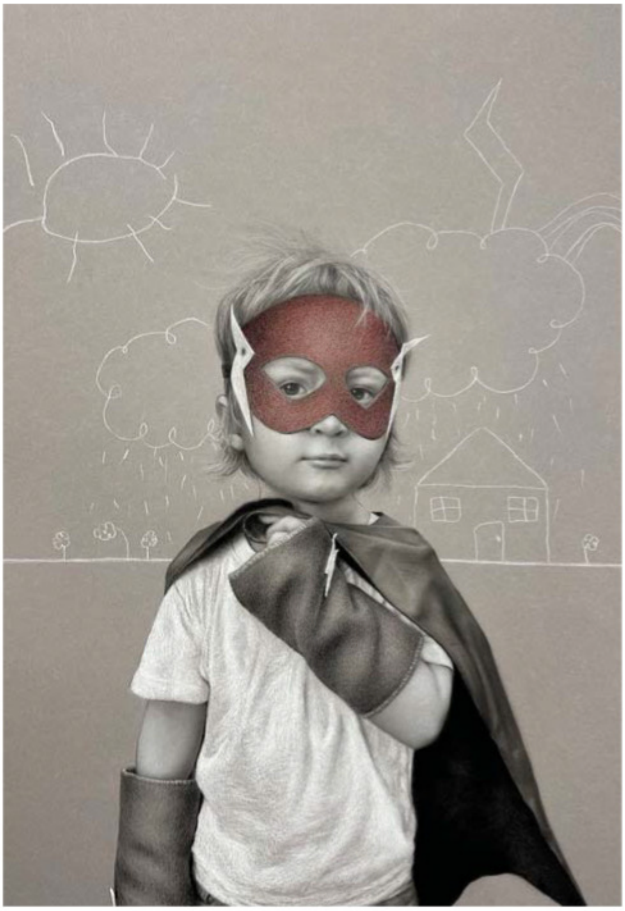
ABOUT ME I'm self-taught in colored pencil, and I enjoy teaching others in classes and workshops throughout South Florida.

THIRD PLACE

Wendi Zlamal

Orlando, Florida

We Could Be Heroes (graphite and pastel on paper, 24x18)



This drawing—part of a series on the juxtaposition of reality and fantasy, particularly in childhood—was inspired by my 4-year-old son's boundless imagination.

I used graphite on toned gray paper, using white charcoal and a bit of red pastel on the mask to add a layer of depth. I wanted to create my subject with detailed realism to portray real life, but use childlike illustrative qualities in the background in the hopes that these two very different drawing techniques could, in fact, strengthen each other. I was hesitant to go for a background that was representative of a child's drawing, but I listened to my intuition and just went for it.

I want this drawing to showcase how powerful our imagination can be—that we can embody a persona or feeling that could take us somewhere else and make us believe we can do anything.

ABOUT ME I have a degree in healthcare, but I've committed to pursuing my art full time. I'm primarily self-taught, but have taken workshops with renowned artists, and they've propelled me on my creative journey.

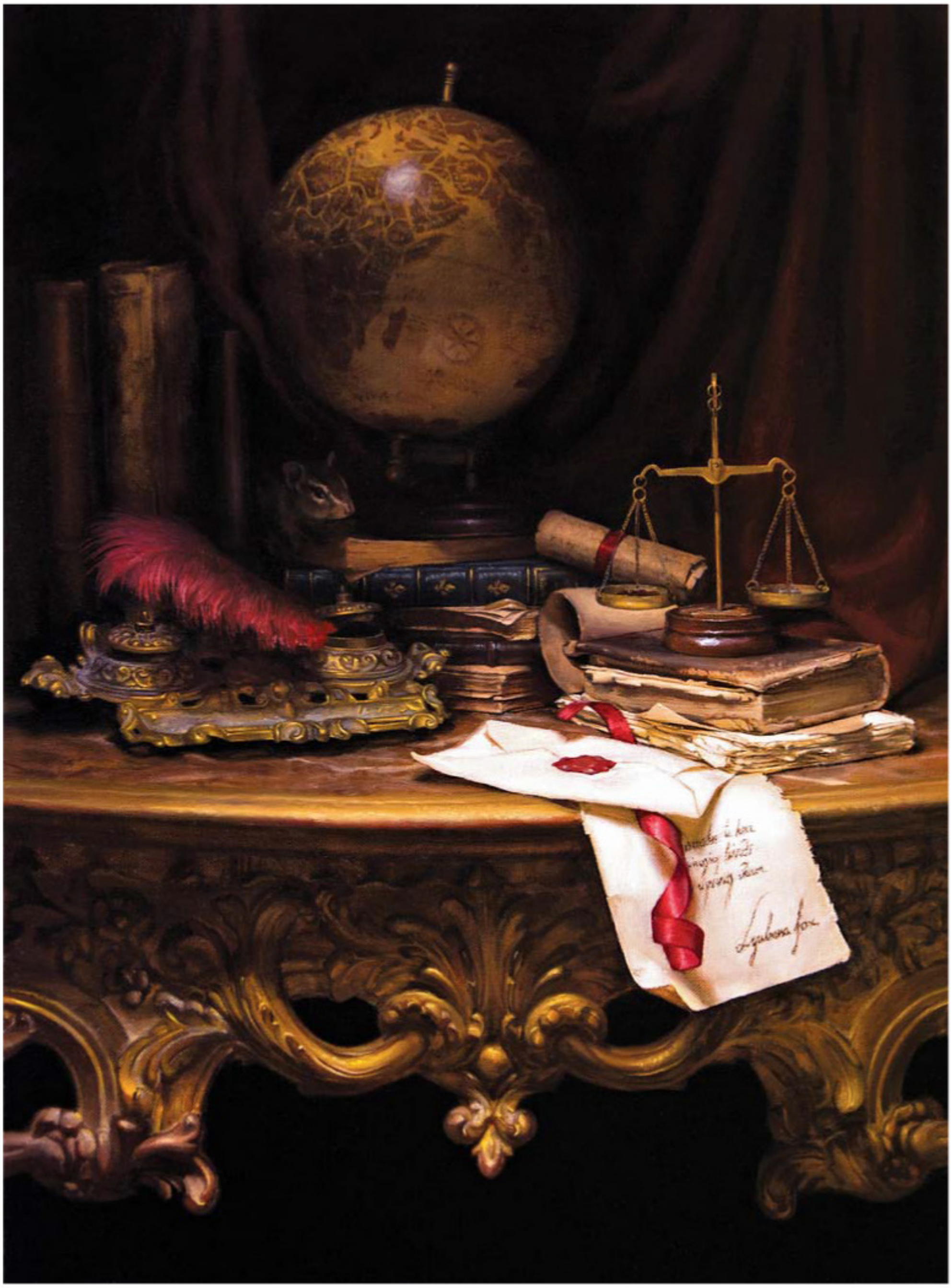
Still Life | Floral | Interior

FIRST PLACE

Lyubena Fox

Sofia, Bulgaria

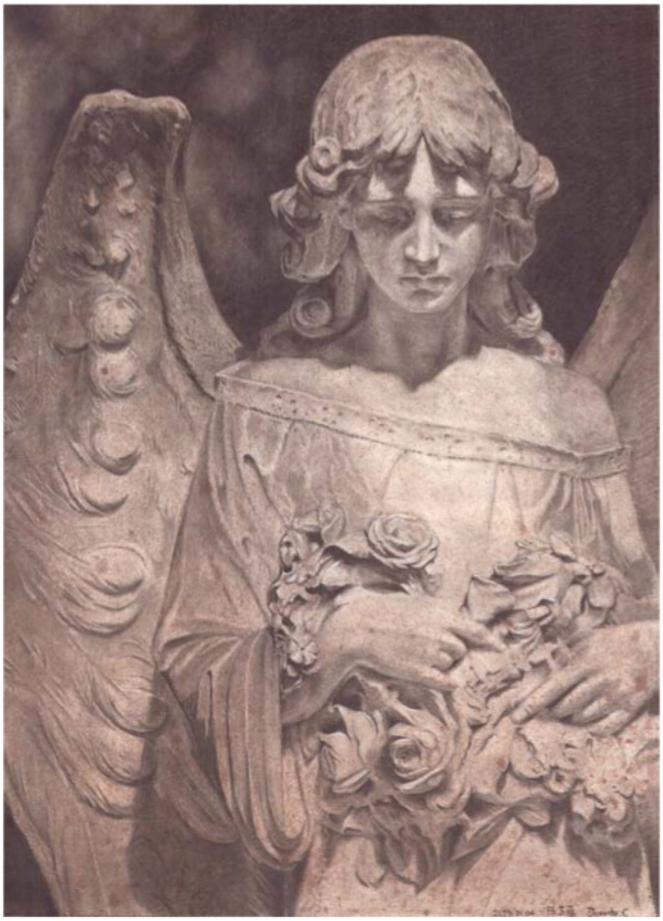
Traveler's Desk
(oil on canvas, 11x7¾)



Everything featured in this still life is painted from a live setup, with the exception of my pet chipmunk peeking from beneath the globe.

My painting philosophy centers on three core principles: Use sound technique and craftsmanship to ensure the work's physical longevity; create a visually compelling design; and convey a narrative that invites the viewer to engage with the piece on a deeper, more meaningful level.

ABOUT ME What changed my outlook on painting was being taught "big-form modeling." This technique aims to create a sense of three-dimensionality by focusing on the large, simplified geometric shapes before adding details. I learned this method during my studies at Angel Academy of Art, in Florence, Italy.



SECOND PLACE

Zhiyun Chen

Guangzhou, China

Angel Blessing (charcoal on paper, 28x20)

In traditional works, angels are often viewed as eternal protectors and sources of blessing, which ties directly to the painting's title. The inclusion of flowers and plaster evokes both Greek culture and Renaissance aesthetics, making them fitting elements within the piece. Most significant, however, is the light. It enhances the emotional mood and brings the work to life.

ABOUT ME I've been painting for more than 15 years, studying various techniques and media, including digital painting, While an undergraduate, I studied animation, and I'm now working on my master's degree through the University of New South Wales.

THIRD PLACE

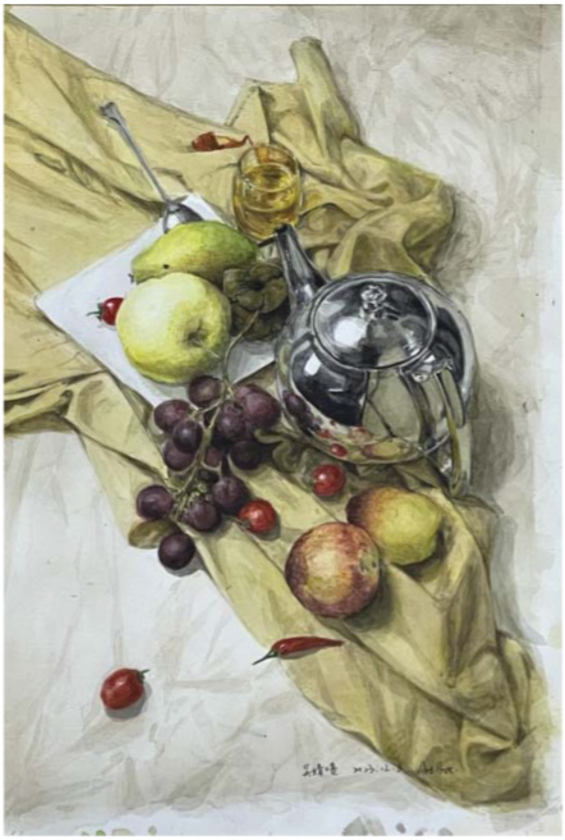
Jingxi Wu

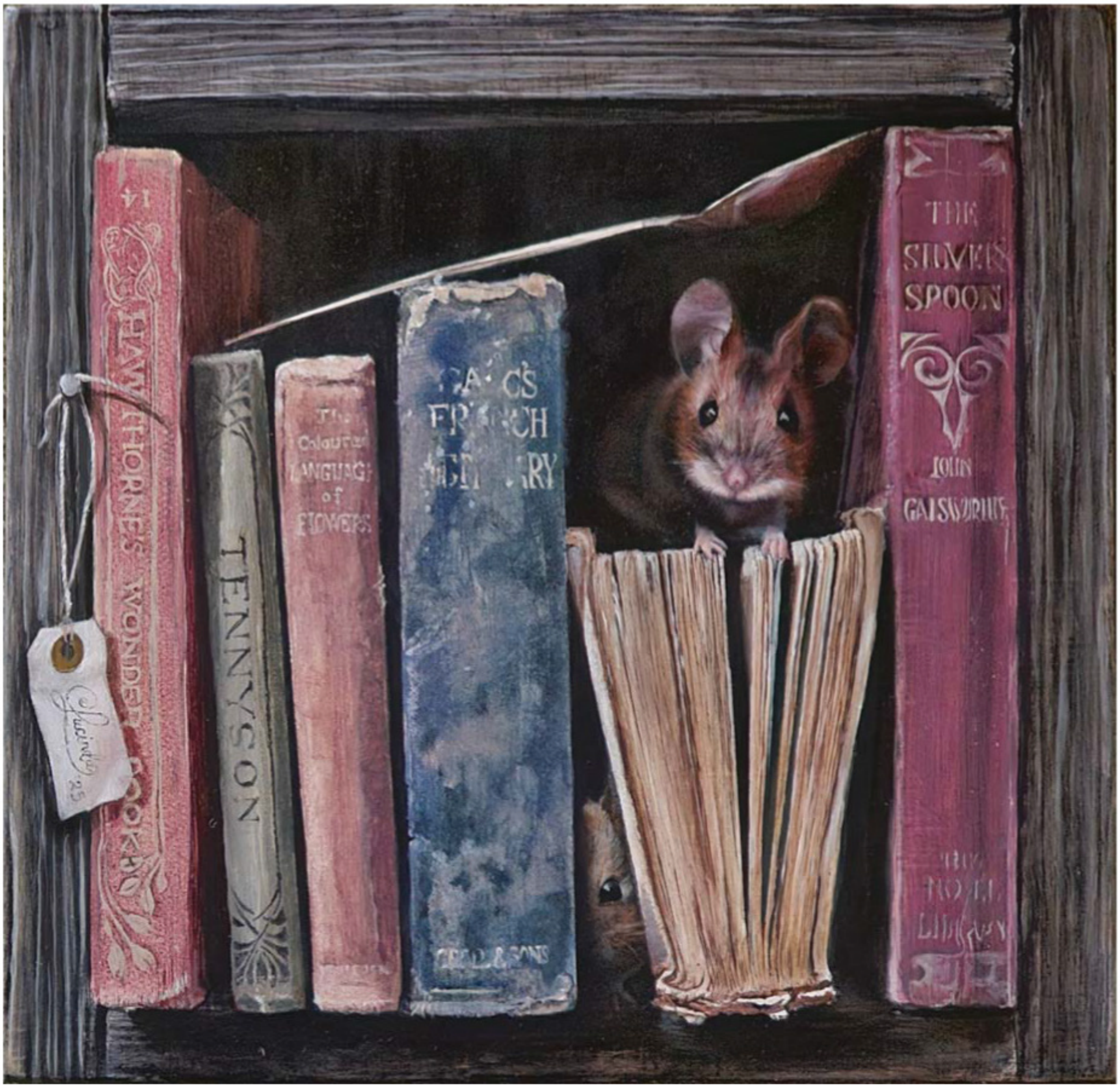
Shanghai, China

Food and Utensils
(watercolor on paper, 15x10)

This is my second watercolor painting, and I spent almost a week working on it. When I saw the metal kettle and its beautiful tones, I immediately wanted to paint it. I layered transparent paints, slowly building up the colors from light to dark with multiple glazes. During the second layer of coloring, the painting already had a hazy, misty effect, which was quite beautiful. Instead of using white paint to tone colors, I prefer to mix light pastel colors to achieve a translucent, bright impact.

ABOUT ME
I'm a 10th grade student, currently studying painting at a studio, preparing for the art college entrance exam. I've been drawing since childhood, but started formal art training in high school. I'd say I'm in a stage of rapid progress and growth.





FIRST PLACE

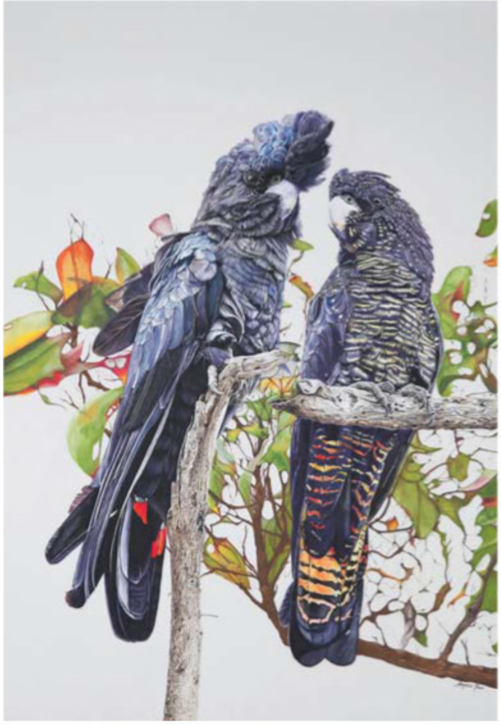
Lucinda Holland

St Austell,
Cornwall,
United Kingdom

The Silver Spoon
(gesso on sanded wood, 7¾x7¾)

I love to explore themes that capture the beauty of the natural world—often in framed oil-in-wood box compositions, as illustrated here—depicting life-size, intimate scenes where emotion, storytelling and subtle symbolism intertwine. *The Silver Spoon* is part of my "In a Box" series featuring small wildlife characters in still-life settings painted on salvaged antique furniture that's meticulously prepared. In this particular piece, I was inspired by the intrinsic beauty in the old and antique books at my mother's house in Cornwall—their worn and evocative titles stirred my imagination. I combined the title of one of the books, "The Silver Spoon," with an antique silver spoon to add a playful, story-like element. Some inquisitive mice complete the story in a layered, and hopefully engaging, narrative.

ABOUT ME I'm a self-taught artist who discovered painting as a source of solace after losing my partner in 2023. With a background in graphic and web design, I transitioned to art professionally in 2024, gaining recognition for my animal portraits. I'm now honing my distinctive style, creating more narrative-driven and stand-alone trompe l'oeil pieces.



SECOND PLACE

Angela Parr

Knockrow, Northern NSW, Australia

The Reds (pastel on Pastelmat, 31½x23½)

The mainstay of my artwork is the wildlife of Australia, especially those that are critically endangered. I recently spent time in Western Australia, where these stunning Forest Red-tailed Black Cockatoos reside. They mate for life, sometimes for more than 50 years. But because they breed slowly—just one young every second year—increasing the species' numbers has proven difficult.

I used two different images of a male and female, sizing them up to life-size, and created a composition showcasing their unity. I used a combination of pastels and pastel pencils on Pastelmat, which is now my standard practice. Looking up slightly at the pair gives them a more lofty, regal status, which I believe they deserve.

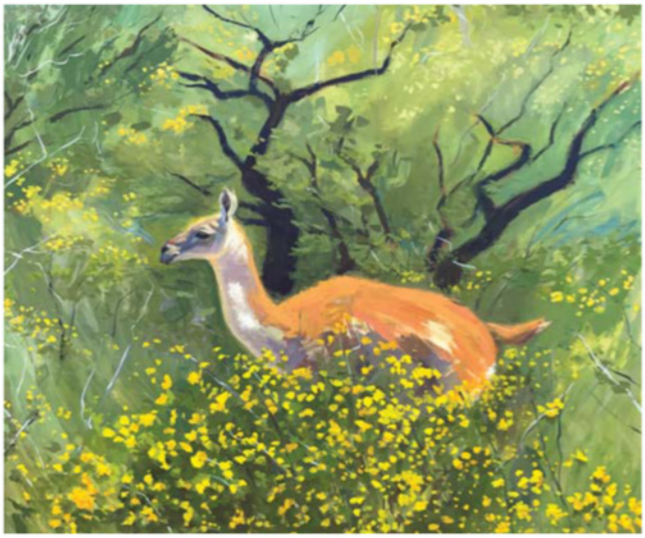
ABOUT ME As a child, I was always drawing, until the rigors of study and university took over, followed by marriage, childrearing, a secondary teaching career, a graphic design certificate and a veterinary nursing degree. I eventually found my way back to art and have devoted myself to my craft for the past decade.

THIRD PLACE

Amelia Gutierrez

General Roca, Rio Negro, Argentina

Guanaco en Lihue Calel (oil on canvas, 40x47½)



This work focuses on the harmony between the guanaco, a symbol of South American wildlife, and its environment. The loose brushstrokes and an emphasis on light and color aim to capture a fleeting moment of beauty. I painted the burnt branches dark and rough using a palette knife. In contrast, I used fluid shades of yellow to paint the flowering rockrose, which symbolizes life and renewal.

This tension between the elements reflects a natural cycle of destruction and regeneration. Amid this landscape, the guanaco—with its tranquil pose—is a tribute to the purity of the wild, inviting the viewer to reflect on the preservation of spaces like Lihue Calel National Park.

ABOUT ME Although I don't hold an art degree, I wouldn't say I'm self-taught. I studied design and philosophy at the University of Buenos Aires, and I've had the privilege of learning from some of the best Argentinian artists, such as Luis Felipe Noé and Julio Lavallén. My current mentorship is with Claudio Roncoli, who's teaching me to work bigger and create installations.

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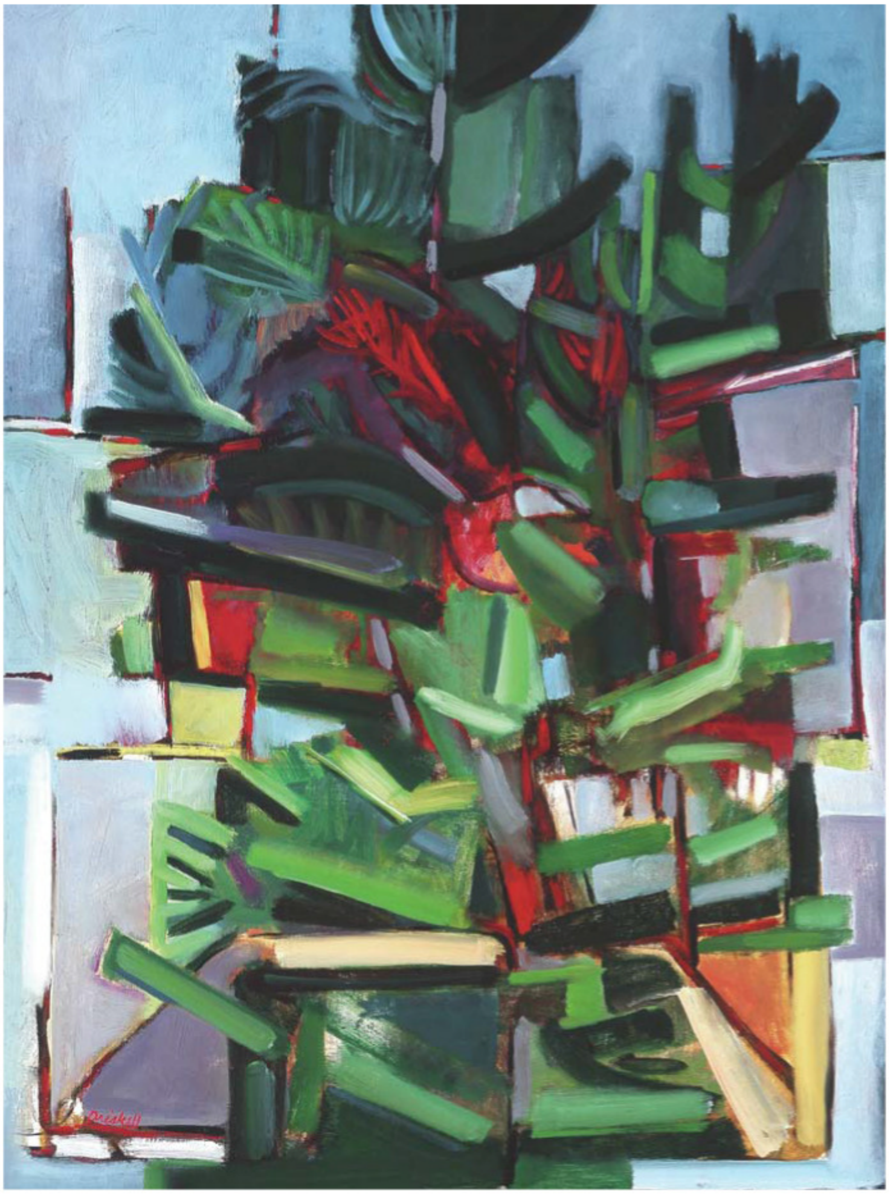
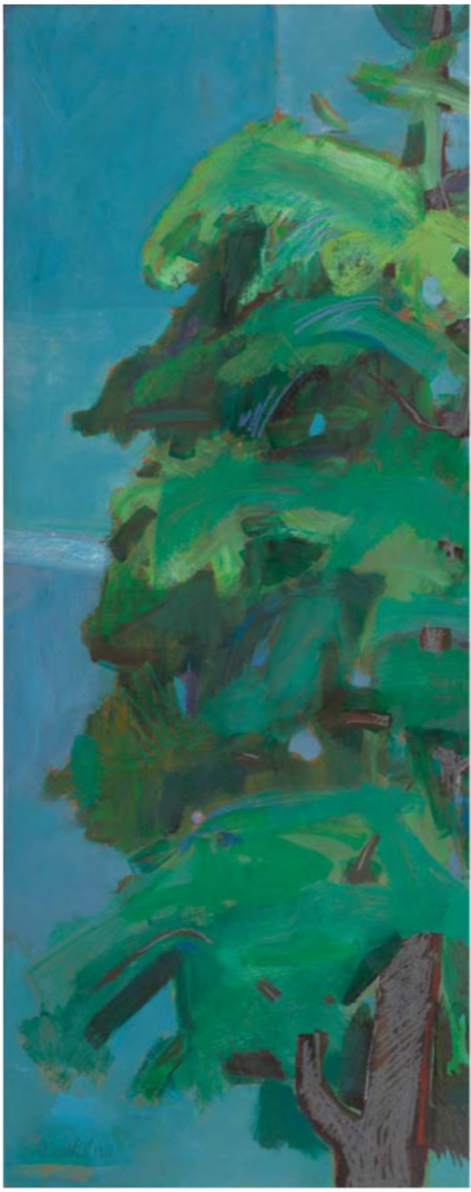
ARTISTSNETWORK.COM/ART-COMPETITIONS

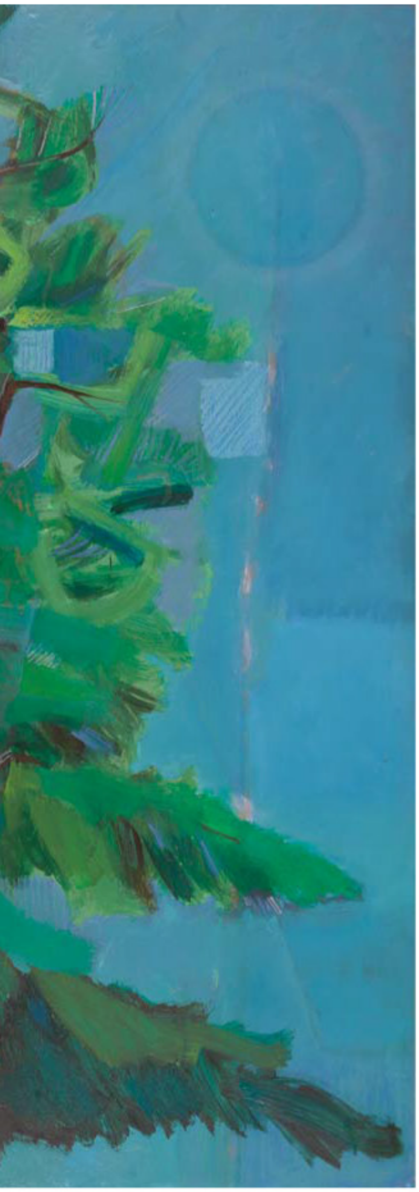
"I devoted my life to teaching, collecting, curating. I wanted to help

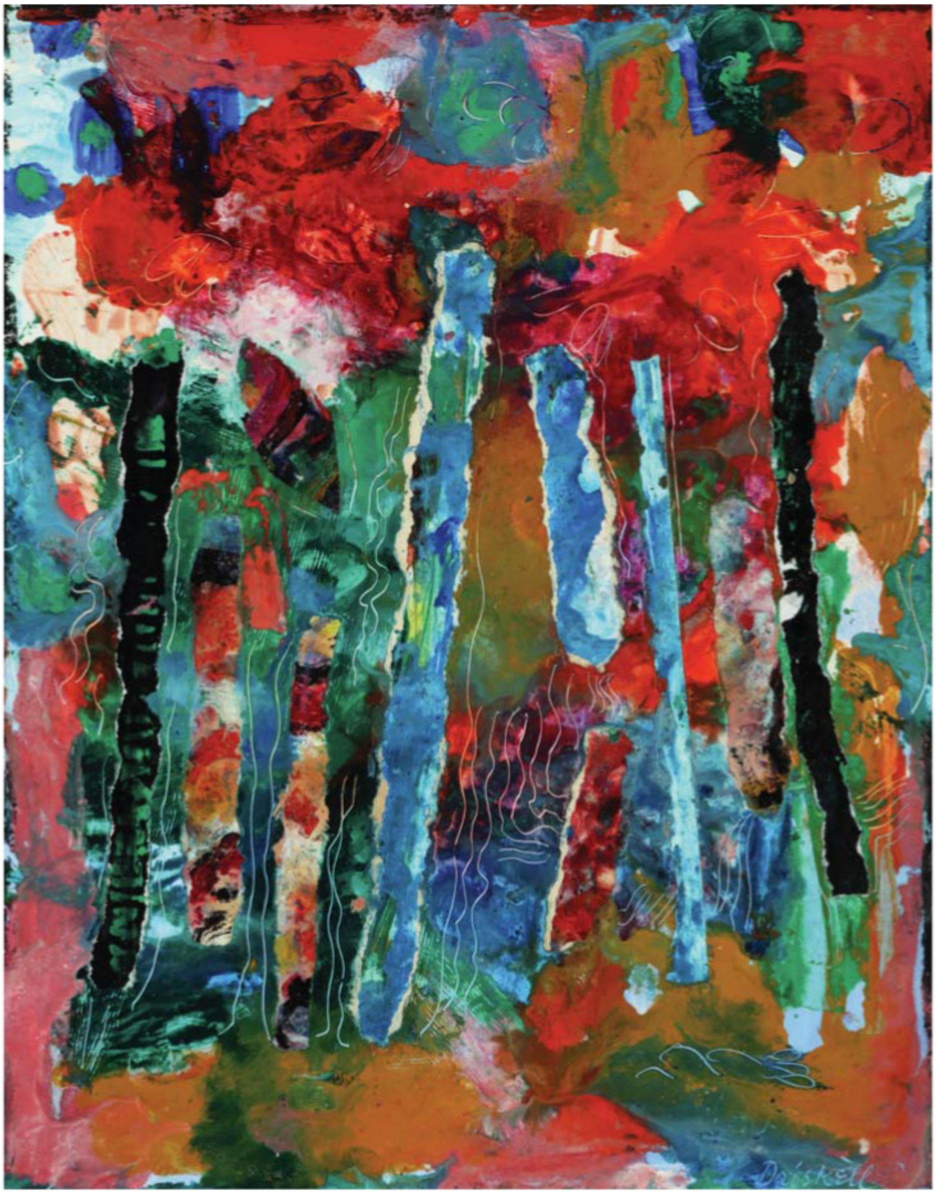




David C. Driskell:
ART & VISION

Discover how one artist-scholar's insight and advocacy reshaped the history and trajectory of Black American art. **By Cynthia Close** *redefine, revise the meaning of American art." —David C. Driskell*





IN 1976, the landmark exhibition, "Two Centuries of Black American Art," opened at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. When it made its way around the country—with stops at the High Museum of Art, in Atlanta; the Museum of Fine Arts, in Dallas; and the Brooklyn Museum, in New York City—it drew thousands of visitors and sparked debate. For many showgoers, it was the first time they had encountered the breadth and depth of Black artistic achievement, which had long been overlooked or excluded from mainstream institutions.

Some established art critics, such as Hilton Kramer of *The New York Times*, were dismissive of the exhibition, while journalists at *Art News* declared that the show "staked a claim for the profound and indelible contributions of Black and African American art-makers since the earliest days of the country." Few exhibitions have had as long-lasting an impact on whole generations of artists and the general public as this history-making show featuring works from the late-18th century to the mid-20th century. (For more about the exhibition, see Marking Achievement, page 65.)

LEFT TO RIGHT
Two Pines #2
(1964; oil on canvas, 48x36)
by David C. Driskell

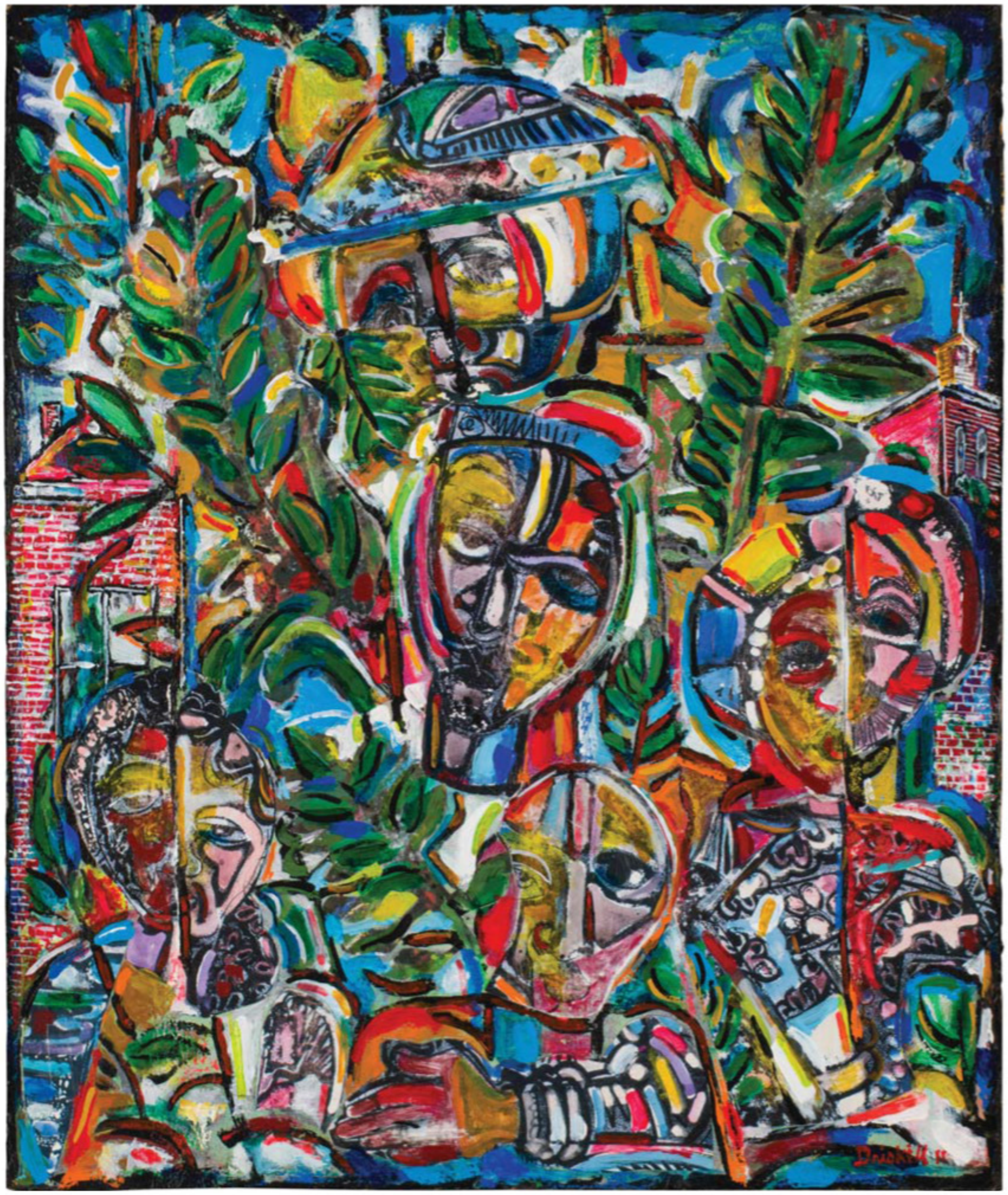
HIGH MUSEUM OF ART, ATLANTA, GIFT OF DAVID C. AND THELMA G. DRISKELL, 2000.203. © ESTATE OF DAVID C. DRISKELL

Pine and Moon
(1971; oil on Masonite, 47⅜x35⅛)
by David C. Driskell

PORTLAND MUSEUM OF ART, MAINE. MUSEUM PURCHASE WITH SUPPORT FROM FRIENDS OF THE COLLECTION, 2011.4. © DAVID C. DRISKELL. IMAGE COURTESY PETER SIEGEL

Autumn Trees
(1991; encaustic and collage on paper)
by David C. Driskell

HIGH MUSEUM OF ART, ATLANTA, GIFT OF KATHARINE J. WATSON IN MEMORY OF PAUL L. NYHUS, 2013.675. © ESTATE OF DAVID C. DRISKELL



Palm Sunday (2011; collage and acrylic on fiberboard, 24x20) by David C. Driskell

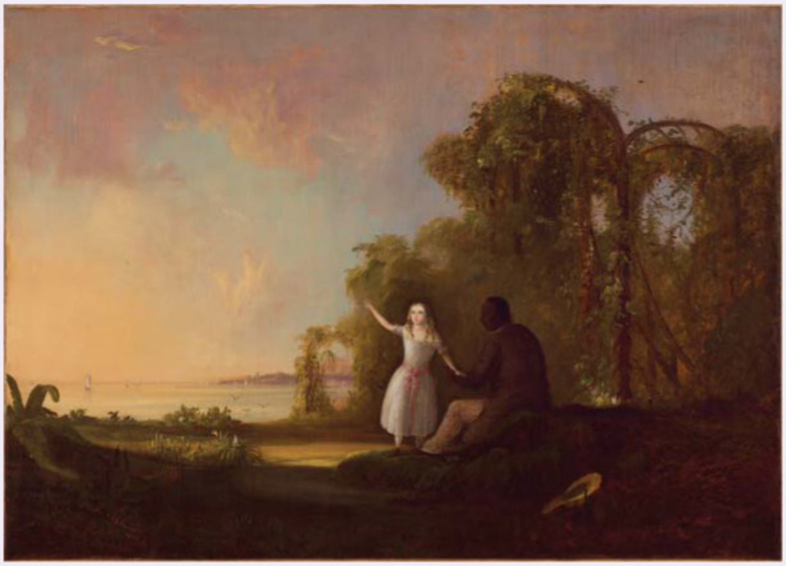
© THE ESTATE OF DAVID C. DRISKELL. COURTESY OF DC MOORE GALLERY, NEW YORK.

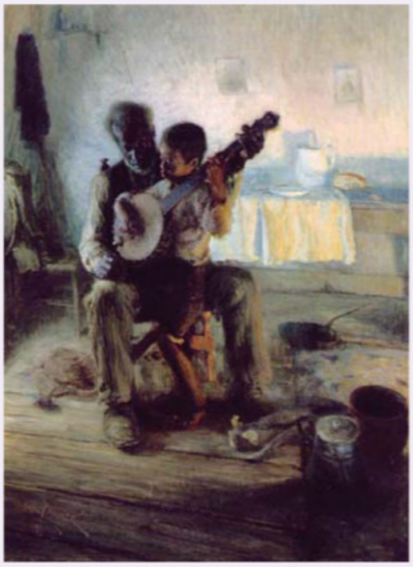
THE MAN BEHIND THE EXHIBITION

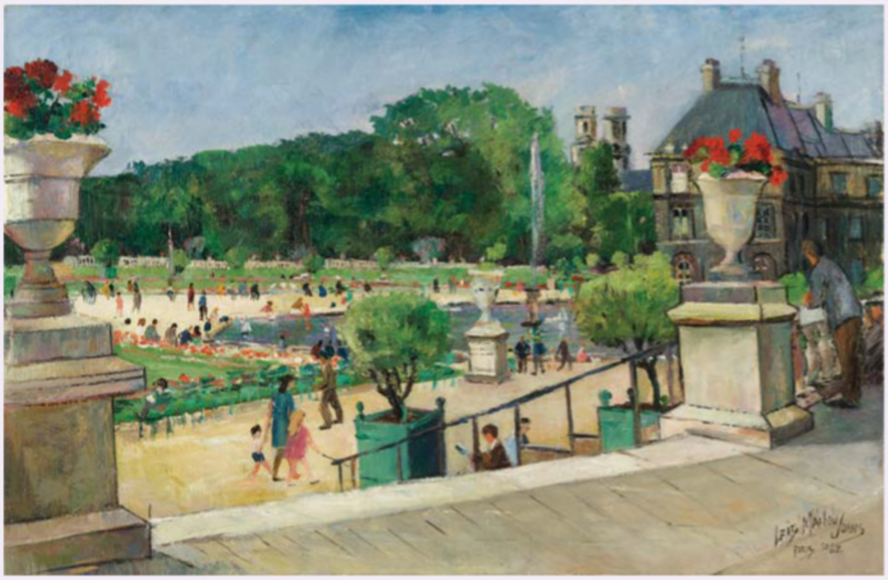
The exhibition and the comprehensive book that accompanied it were the brainchild of American artist, teacher, collector and scholar David C. Driskell (1931–2020). Born in Georgia, the son of a Baptist minister and the grandson of a man born into slavery, Driskell was raised in a creative environment in which making art was part of family life. Driskell's father painted, and his mother practiced the domestic arts of quilting and basketry. Driskell's grandfather was a sculptor.

This fertile ground allowed Driskell's creative impulses to grow. He went on to Washington, D.C., where he attended Howard University. While still an undergraduate, he married Thelma Grace DeLoatch, in 1952. A year later, he received a summer scholarship to attend the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, in Maine. It was a formative experience that led to his lifelong relationship with the school, where he served as visiting faculty, lecturer and, ultimately, a member of the board.

In 1955, Driskell graduated from Howard, earning a BFA with a minor in art history.







CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

Uncle Tom and Little Eva
(1853; oil on canvas, 27¼x38¼)
by Robert S. Duncanson

DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ARTS, GIFT OF MRS. JEFFERSON BUTLER AND MISS GRACE R. CONOVER, 49.498

The Banjo Lesson
(1893; oil on canvas, 49x35½)
by Henry Ossawa Tanner

HAMPTON UNIVERSITY MUSEUM, INVENTORIES OF AMERICAN PAINTING AND SCULPTURE CONTROL NUMBER: IAP 54890001

Paris
(1962, oil on canvas, 23¾x36⅜)
by Loïs Mailou Jones

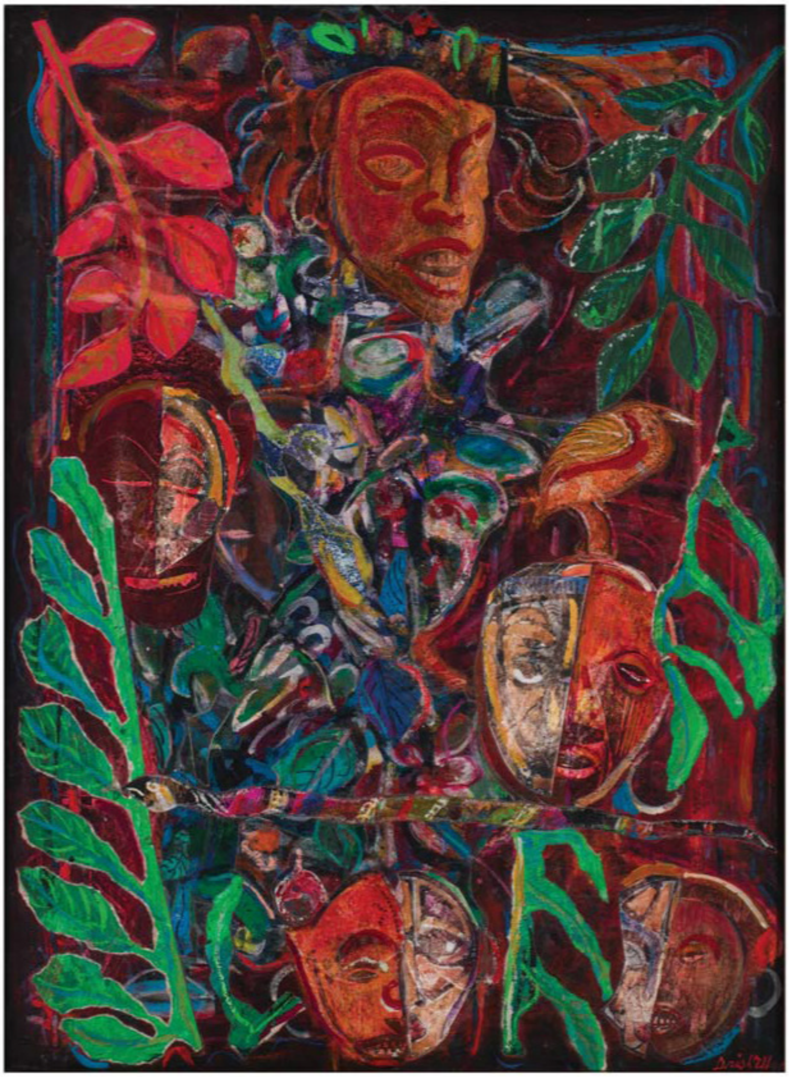
PORTLAND MUSEUM OF ART, MAINE. DAVID C. AND THELMA G. DRISKELL COLLECTION, MUSEUM PURCHASE WITH EXCHANGE FUNDS FROM THE BEQUEST OF MRS. THOMAS B. REED, 2024.8.5. © LOÏS MAILOU JONES PIERRE-NOËL TRUST. IMAGE COURTESY PETEGORSKY/GIPE PHOTO

MARKING ACHIEVEMENT

Many of the more than 200 works by 63 artists and artisans in "Two Centuries of Black American Art" were new discoveries for the art world and the public when they first toured the United States. Artists like Robert S. Duncanson (1821–72), a free slave and abolitionist whose masterful landscape paintings rivaled those of the well-known Hudson River School artists Thomas Cole (1801–48) and Albert Bierstadt (1830–1902), were a revelation. Duncanson's painting, *Uncle Tom and Little Eva*, was included in the exhibition.

Pennsylvania-born Henry Ossawa Tanner (1859–1937), who spent much of his life in France, was the first African American artist to receive international acclaim. A 1910 photograph of the artist in his spacious Paris studio, along with *The Banjo Lesson*—an 1893 figurative oil painting depicting a slice of African American life and culture—were exhibited in the show.

The works of artists included in the exhibition—such as those by Joshua Johnson (1763–1824), Loïs Mailou Jones (1905–98), Romare Bearden (1911–88), Elizabeth Catlett (1915–2012) and Jacob Lawrence (1917–2000)—helped to establish a parallel timeline of achievement. They stood alongside those of the white, predominantly male American and European artists who were studied in art schools and whose works dominated museum and private collections through the 20th and into the 21st century.



LEFT
Mystery of the Masks
(2005; collage and acrylic on paper, 29½x21⅝)
by David C. Driskell

© THE ESTATE OF DAVID C. DRISKELL. COURTESY OF DC MOORE GALLERY, NEW YORK.

OPPOSITE
Her Face Was Like the Moon
(1995; collage and acrylic on paper, 40x26¼)
by David C. Driskell

© THE ESTATE OF DAVID C. DRISKELL. COURTESY OF DC MOORE GALLERY, NEW YORK.

That same year, 14-year-old Emmett Till, a Black teenager, was brutally murdered for allegedly flirting with a white woman. Driskell was deeply affected by this event and, in response, painted *Behold Thy Son* (not shown). The 1956 oil on canvas presents the bruised and battered body of Till as a Christ-like figure with his arms outstretched in the form of a crucifixion. Pietà-like, the hands and arms of a figure behind him are visible, holding his body. The painting was a tour de force for such a young artist and is in the permanent collection of the Smithsonian.

While grappling with the emotional weight of Till's murder through his work, Driskell was also beginning to lay the foundation for a lifelong passion—*collecting* art. He said, "I think it's important to collect art because you feel it is part of your lifestyle—and it debunks the notion that African Americans don't buy art."

Driskell first taught at Talladega College, in Alabama, before receiving his MFA from Catholic University, in 1962. He became an associate professor of art at Howard from 1963 to 1964 and held a fellowship at the Netherlands Institute for Art History, in The Hague, in the summer of 1964.

Impressed by how The Hague collected and documented the work and personal materials of the nation's artists, Driskell was inspired to do the same for African American artists. He encouraged artists to keep their own archives, and his desire to create a foundation for future Black artists to build upon was manifested in "Two Centuries of Black American Art."

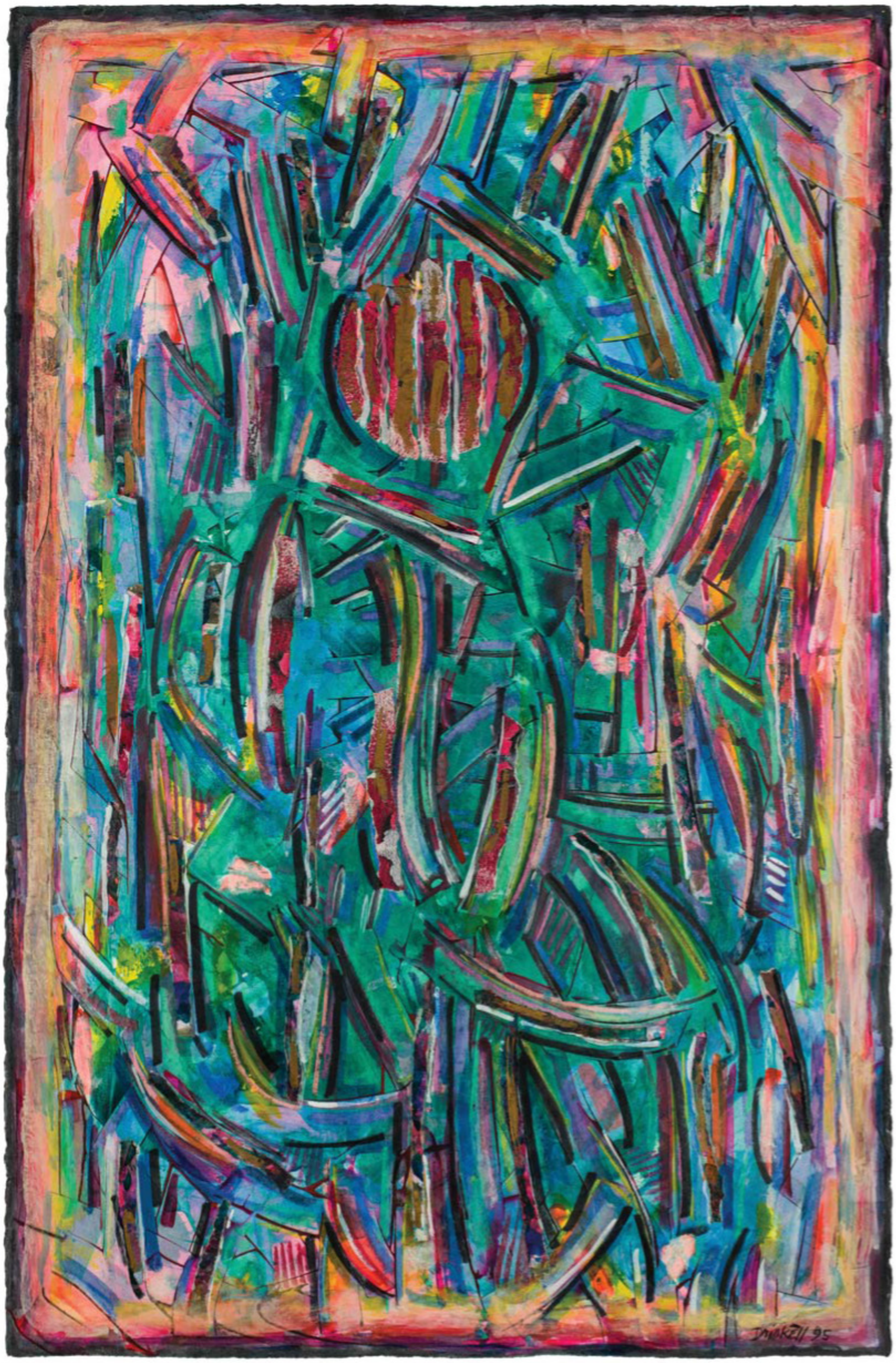
The book that accompanied the exhibition became the definitive textbook for Black artists, much like H. W. Janson's *History of Art*, which was a key textbook first published in 1962 and used by most university art history departments.

As feminism and civil rights activism gained momentum in the 1960s, Janson's book faced criticism for its predominantly white, male European viewpoint. Early editions excluded female artists entirely. Notably, Driskell was a passionate advocate for both Black female artists and their male peers.

SHARING A LOVE OF ART

Teaching was at the core of Driskell's life. He was invited to lead the art department at Fisk University, in Nashville, Tenn., in 1966, just two years following passage of the Civil Rights Act and the abolition of Jim Crow segregation.

It was the same year that I, an aspiring artist and student at Boston University School for the Arts, encountered painter and sculptor John Wilson (1922–2015). Wilson was a new faculty member and the first Black instructor in the department. His powerful, figurative work was among the work included in the groundbreaking exhibition. Learning this was



"THE STUDIO IS A PLACE OF JOY, COMFORT, REASSURANCE, AS WELL AS A PLACE TO MEDITATE AND PRAY. IT IS MY SACRED GROVE." —DAVID C. DRISKELL deeply rewarding and revealed a vibrant community of Black artists who supported one another during a time when the art world was more fixated on the rising prominence of American abstract expressionists like Jackson Pollock (1912–56) and Willem de Kooning (1904–97).

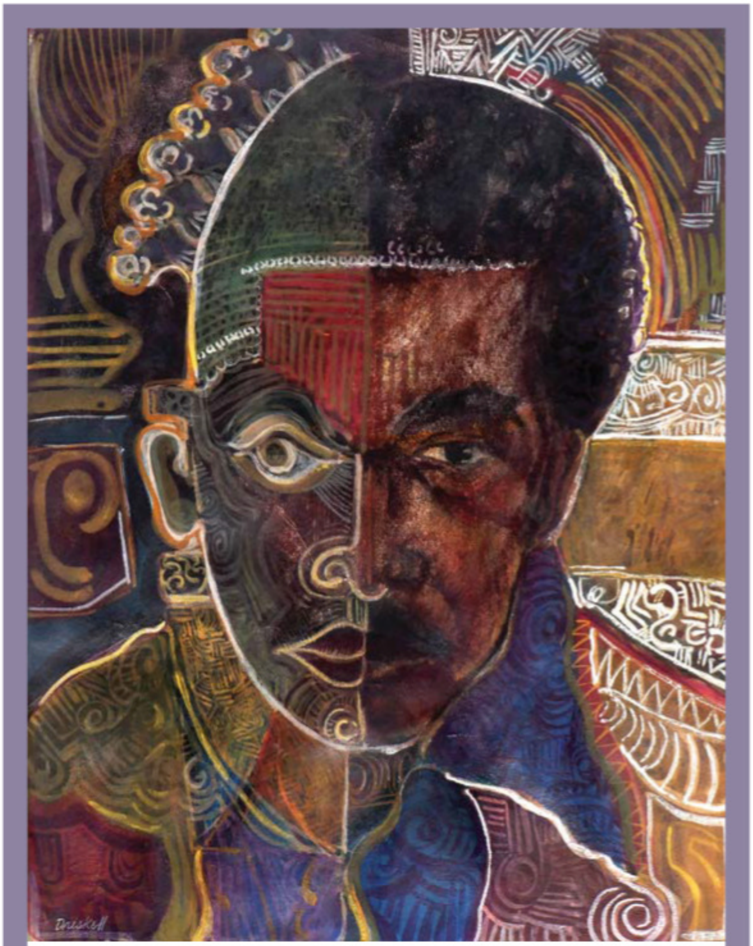
Driskell taught at the Skowhegan School in 1976, 1978, 1991 and 2004, sharing his knowledge with generations of emerging artists. He also taught art at the University of Maryland, College Park, in 1976. He then chaired the art department from 1978 to 1983 and was named Distinguished University Professor of Art in 1995, retiring from the that position in 1998. The university opened the David C. Driskell Center for the Study of Visual Arts and Culture of African Americans and the African Diaspora, in 2001.

A SEARCH FOR MEANING

For Driskell, a sense of place played an important role throughout his career and in his art. His attendance in 1953 at the Skowhegan School sparked a relationship that extended beyond the barns and studios of Skowhegan to embrace the landscape of Maine as a creative place. The artist referred to his summer home and studio in Falmouth as "my Spirit House." It's there where he did some of his best work. He once noted, "The studio is a place of joy, comfort, reassurance, as well as a place to meditate and pray. It is my sacred grove."

This deep connection to both place and nature became a central theme in Driskell's artistic vision. Trees are certainly ever present in any Maine landscape, but it was the pine tree that held significant symbolic meaning and was a recurring motif in his work throughout his career, as seen in *Two Pines #2* (page X62) and *Pine and Moon* (pages 62–63). "Trees are my connection to the eternal; like an enduring witness, they connect the past to the present," he said.

Driskell's city studio in Maryland was smaller than his rural workspace in Maine, yet both spaces reflected his deep connection to the objects that inspired him—including African masks, which he began collecting during his first trip to Africa, in 1969. He soon began incorporating masks in his work as a representation of the spirit of his ancestors.



Self Portrait as Beni ("I Dream Again of Benin")
(1974; egg tempera, gouache and collage on paper) by David C. Driskell

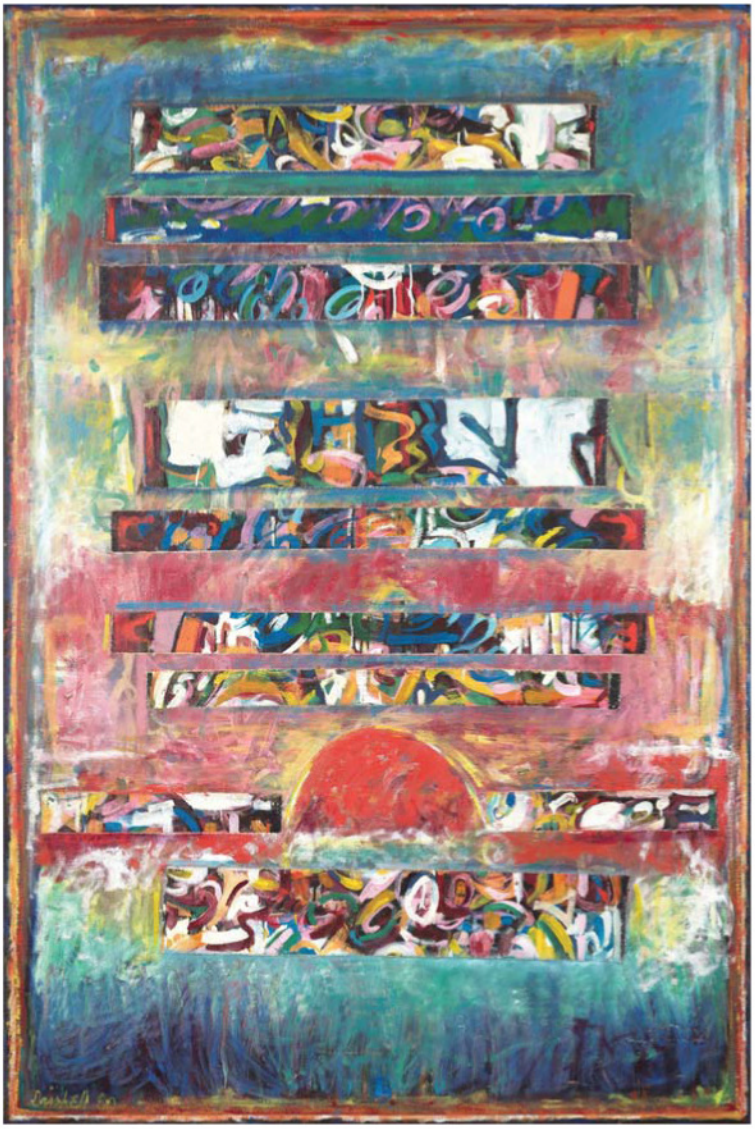
HIGH MUSEUM OF ART, ATLANTA, PURCHASE WITH DAVID C. DRISKELL AFRICAN AMERICAN ART ACQUISITION FUND, 2015.74. © ESTATE OF DAVID C. DRISKELL

THE HIGH LIFE

The High Museum of Art, in Atlanta, has a long history of collaboration with Driskell. In addition to exhibiting "Two Centuries of Black American Art," in 1977, the museum has acquired a number of the artist's works.

"David Driskell: Icons of Nature and History," a 2021 exhibition, showcased important works from the collection, including the artist's *Self Portrait as Beni ("I Dream Again of Benin")*.

In 2005, the museum established the David C. Driskell Prize, the first national award to honor and celebrate contributions to the field of African American art, including distinctions for both artists and scholars. Funds raised through the prize's annual dinner have supported the acquisition of 48 works by African American artists for the High's collection. Sculptor Alison Saar (b. 1956) is the recipient of this year's Driskell Prize, marking the award's 20th anniversary.



Upward Bound
(1980; acrylic and mixed media on canvas)
by David C. Driskell

HIGH MUSEUM OF ART, ATLANTA, PURCHASE WITH FUNDS FROM SANDRA ANDERSON BACCUS IN LOVING MEMORY OF LLOYD TEVIS BACCUS, M.D., AND GENERAL ACQUISITIONS FUND, 2007.28. © ESTATE OF DAVID C. DRISKELL

Masks also symbolize the duality of human nature and the potential for transformation. Driskell's use of masks in his self-portraits and other works suggests that masks can conceal and reveal, allowing for the exploration of complex identities.

In *Self Portrait as Beni ("I Dream Again of Benin")* (opposite), a 1974 mixed-media work, Driskell combines a contemporary self-portrait and the ancient Benin kingdom as one. Driskell visited Benin City (formerly Edo, capital of the Kingdom of Benin), in 1970. In 2022, DC Moore Gallery, in New York City, mounted "David Driskell: Mystery of the Masks," an exhibition dedicated to his works on this theme. The gallery, which represents Driskell's work, included the following pieces in the show: *Palm Sunday* (page 64); *Mystery of the Masks* (page 66); and *Her Face Was Like the Moon* (page 67).

Driskell's work was driven by a search for meaning rather than a desire to fit into a stylistic trend. He constantly experimented with new materials and absorbed information from those artists whose work he admired and collected. For example, he learned color theory and watercolor from Loïs Mailou Jones (1905–98), one of the most accomplished female artists of any generation. (See her painting, *Paris*, on page 65.) Driskell discovered acrylics from American artist Leonard Bocour (1910–93), at Skowhegan, when he was an undergraduate, but generally preferred to combine acrylics with other media. He made his own inks using pokeberry (purplish) and walnut oil.

During a residency at Yaddo, in Sarasota Springs, N.Y., Driskell incorporated fabric and cheesecloth with paint, shaping the materials like a quilt or a weaving. *Upward Bound* (left), a large mixed-media work from 1980, is an example of his approach to abstraction. He used collage strips in which fragments seem to float in an atmospheric haze of color.

LEAVING A LEGACY

Over the course of his distinguished career, Driskell reshaped the art world through scholarship, curation, teaching and advocacy for Black artists. Throughout his career as an art historian, he curated 35 exhibitions around the world, championing African American art on an international stage. Driskell authored seven books, and his own artworks are held in major museum collections across the globe.

In recognition of his numerous contributions, he received the National Humanities Medal from President Bill Clinton, in 2000, along with nine honorary doctorates. In 2021, a year after Driskell's death, HBO released "Black Art: In the Absence of Light," a documentary directed by filmmaker Sam Pollard. The artist appears in the film as a dynamic storyteller, narrating his own life.

Driskell's impressive legacy endures as a guiding force in American art history—shaping how we see, study and value the contributions of Black artists.

Cynthia Close (cynthiaclose.com) earned an MFA from Boston University and worked in various art-related roles before becoming a writer and editor.

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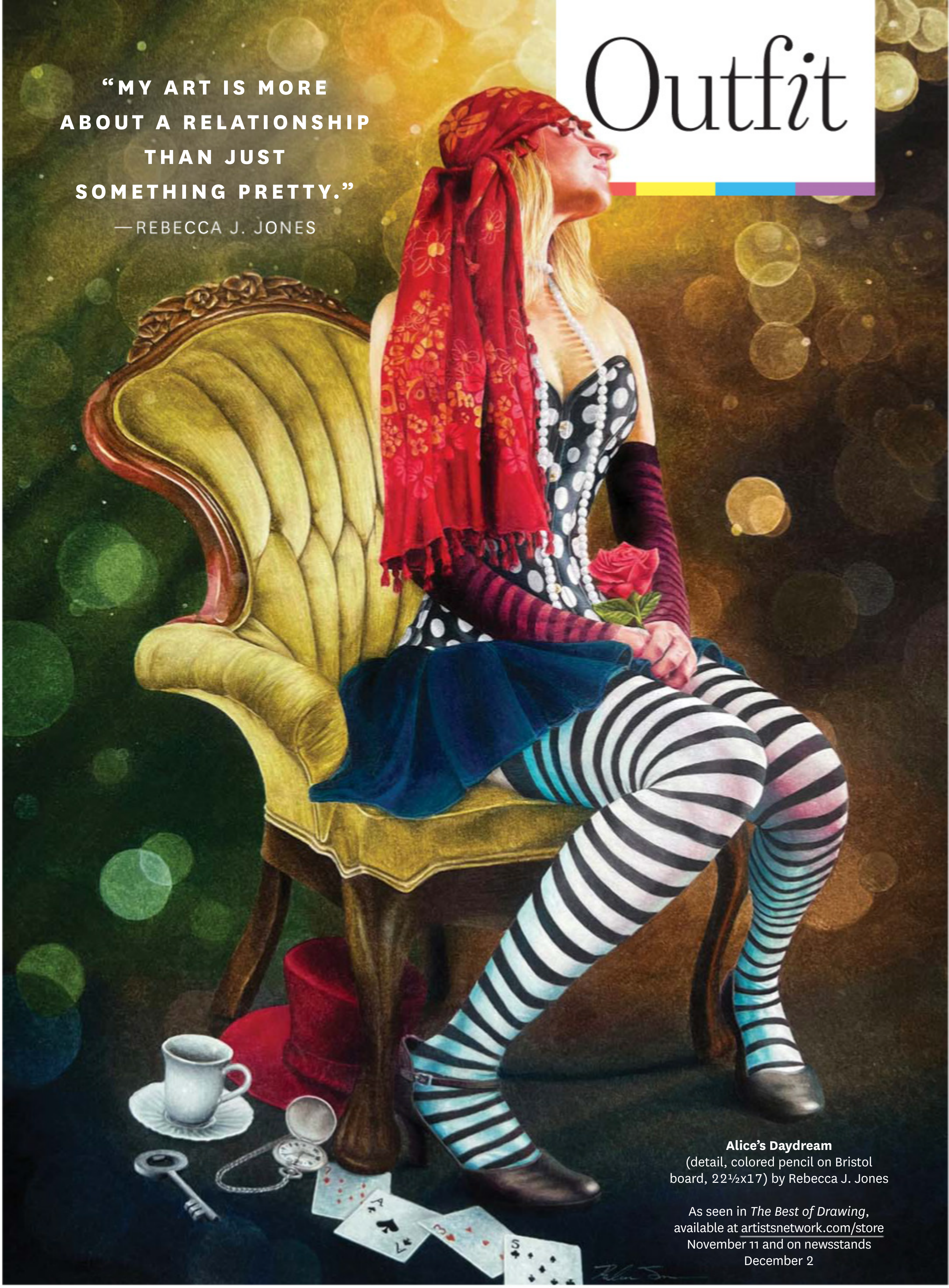


> "MY ART IS MORE ABOUT A RELATIONSHIP THAN JUST SOMETHING PRETTY."
>
> —REBECCA J. JONES

Alice's Daydream
(detail, colored pencil on Bristol board, 22½x17) by Rebecca J. Jones

As seen in *The Best of Drawing*, available at artistsnetwork.com/store November 11 and on newsstands December 2

BY CYNTHIA CLOSE

Corporate Art Collecting: Then and Now

MM
MATTATUCK MUSEUM ARTS & HISTORY CENTER
MM

The newly renovated Mattatuck Museum, in Waterbury, Conn., was the host of a recent exhibition loaned through the Bank of America Art in our Communities® program.

Art has long been considered a valuable investment by corporations. Some of the earliest records of corporate art collecting go back to the Renaissance, when banks such as the Monte Dei Paschi, in Siena, Italy, began collecting art as a branding tool and sign of prestige. The bank is still in business today, so the strategy seems to have worked.

“BANKING” ON COLLECTING

The practice took off in the United States during the 19th century when wealthy nouveau-riche industrialists saw art as a vehicle to compete culturally with well-established European elite. The post-war economic boom of the 1950s ignited a significant surge in corporate art collecting, especially among companies seeking to project a more refined, forward-thinking image. As during the Renaissance, banks were at the forefront of recognizing not only the economic value of art collections, but also the intangible benefits such as shaping identity and conferring status.

David Rockefeller, then president of Chase Manhattan Bank (now part of JPMorgan Chase & Co.), is widely credited with pioneering modern corporate art collecting, in 1959. He believed in the power of art for positive change and made art in the bank’s collection visible and public within the corporate environment. He and his wife, Susan, also amassed a large personal art collection; their philanthropy was focused on supporting art museums like The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) and other cultural institutions for the benefit of the general public.

Beyond expressions of public goodwill or brand identity, some corporate institutions regard art collecting as a strategic economic investment. The stratospheric rise in value of some artworks at auction within a few years after purchase acts as fuel to the speculative fire. The Rockefeller collection began with a modest investment of $500,000; near the end of his life, Rockefeller estimated its value as more than $100 million. Basing a collection solely on speculation that it will increase in value can be risky, however. Tastes in today’s unpredictable global art market can shift quickly from one auction season to the next.

IN THE CROSSFIRE

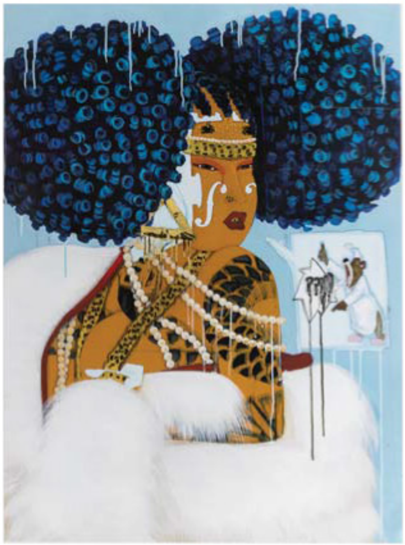
Recently, art and those corporations that collect or sponsor it have become highly visible targets in the culture wars. In 2022, members from an environmentalist anti-fossil fuel group threw tomato soup on Vincent van Gogh’s *Sunflowers*; in 2024, Leonardo da Vinci’s *Mona Lisa* took the hit. Using art as a platform for protest has sparked debate, with some questioning whether targeting artworks helps or hinders the protesters’ goals.

Perhaps the most recent—and most notorious—example of corporate art in crisis is that of the Sackler family. Their support of the arts is considered an attempt to compensate for the role their company, Purdue Pharma, played in creating the opioid addiction crisis. Sackler money and art collections have benefited many major art museums worldwide, including MoMA, the Guggenheim Museum, the Louvre, the British Museum and the Smithsonian Institution, all of which have come under attack for the association. In some cases, the institutions have responded by removing the Sackler name from their buildings and pledging to no longer accept the family’s largess.

The politics of corporate funding and philanthropy continue to polarize institutional response worldwide. Some United Kingdom national museums, for example, back a call for an end to “relentless negativity” around corporate arts sponsorship. British arts communications specialist Martin Prendergast has said, “Artists and arts institutions need funds to imagine different futures. I fundamentally believe in the right to protest. For me, the causes are right, but the targets are wrong.”

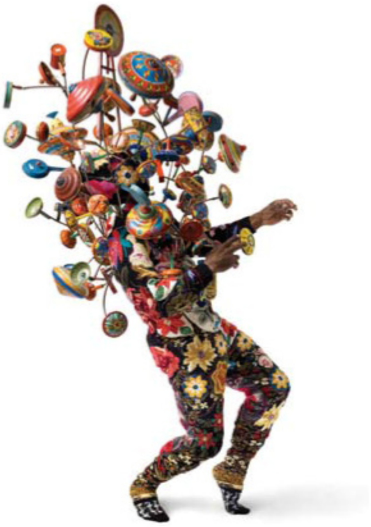
THE POWER OF SUPPORT

In today’s world, in which the arts are under siege politically and moneyed corporations are often portrayed as enemies, it’s helpful to be reminded that some large



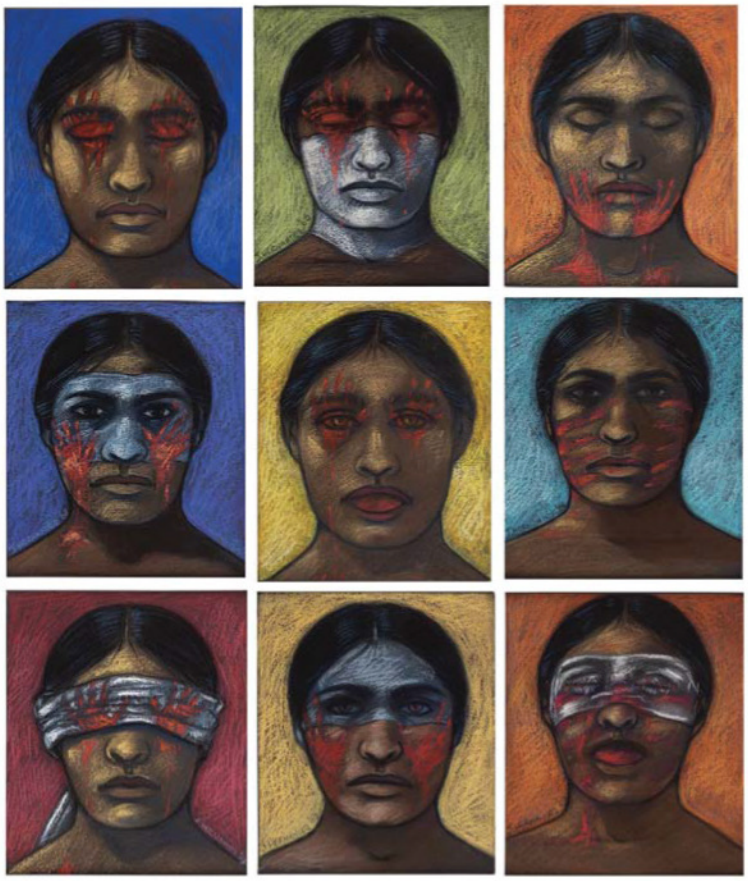
El Oso Me Preguntó (The Bear Asked Me) (2016, edition of 8; archival print with unique gold leaf overlay) by Rozeal (American, b. 1966)

BANK OF AMERICA COLLECTION
COURTESY OF ROZEAL



Soundsuit #1 (2011, edition of 20; color photograph made with archival pigments on fine art rag paper with matte finish, 60×42) by Nick Cave (American, b. 1957)

BANK OF AMERICA COLLECTION



Mano colorada, manos de sangre, mano de opresión (Red Hand, Bloody Hand, Hand of Oppression) (2008; series of nine pastels on paper) by Judithe Hernández (American, b. 1948)

BANK OF AMERICA COLLECTION ©JUDITHE HERNÁNDEZ

institutions remain important and ethical supporters of the arts.

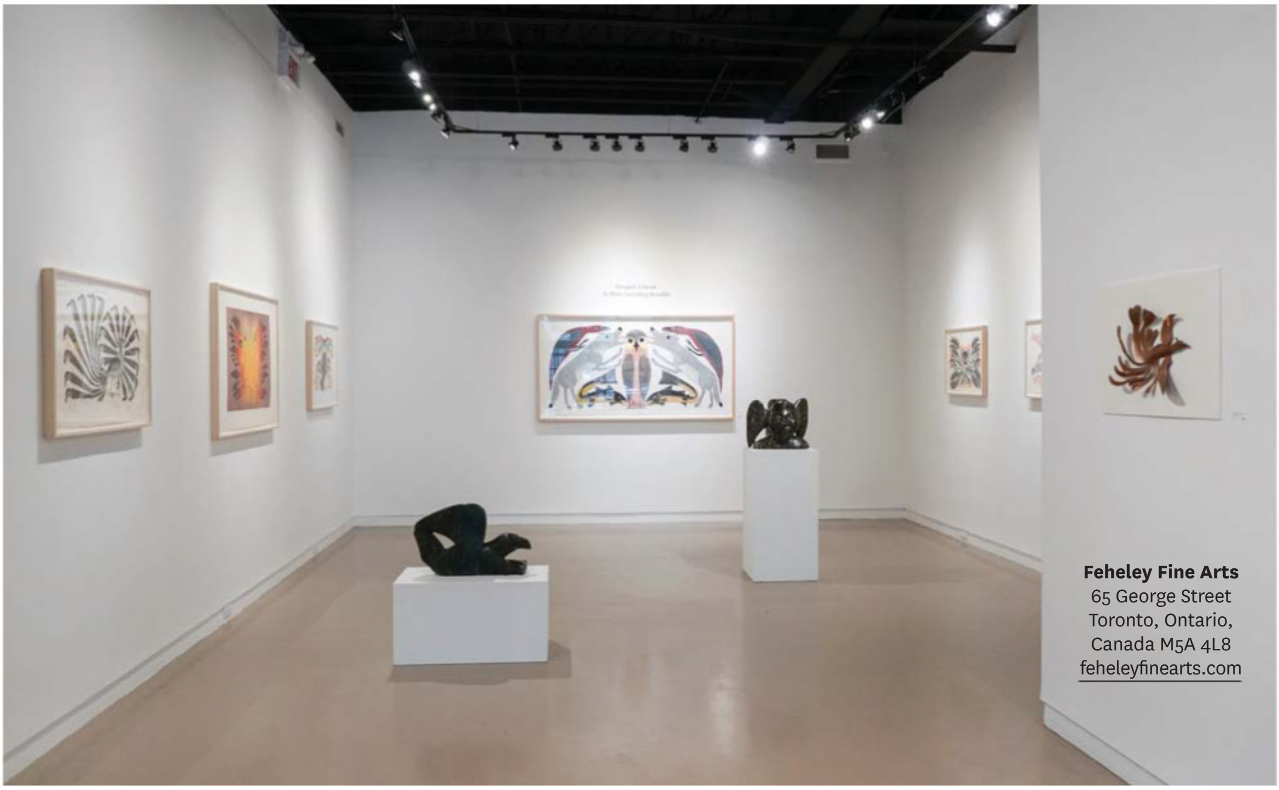
This past summer's debut showing of the exhibition, "The Body Imagined: Figurative Art in the Bank of America Collection," took place at the recently renovated Mattatuck Museum, in Waterbury, Conn. The show featured the work of important contemporary artists (left), including Milton Avery (1885–1965), Nick Cave (b. 1957), Alex Katz (b. 1927) and Cindy Sherman (b. 1954). The exhibition examined how 20th-century and contemporary artists have used the human figure in a variety of media to communicate vibrant, compelling and emotive images.

Cecelia "Keffie" Feldman, Ph.D., Mattatuck's chief curator, recently discussed the museum's engagement and collaboration with Bank of America's art program. "As a mid-sized museum that mounts exhibitions three times a year in four different gallery spaces," she said, "we don't have the budget to put on blockbuster shows, so we jumped at the opportunity to get this exhibition. The bank covers all the expenses. These shows are very competitive, so when we were informed the bank was putting together this new show about the figure, and they asked if we wanted to be the inaugural presenter, we said, 'Sign us up!'"

Working collaboratively with the managers of the bank's collection in the developmental phase of the exhibition provided the museum flexibility. "We requested that all the signage in the show be fully bilingual, English and Spanish, and the bank agreed," Feldman noted. While corporations aren't often known for risk-taking, the works in this show are "asking people to think critically," she added.

Despite its complexities and controversies, corporate art collecting continues to play a vital role in supporting artistic innovation and bridging communities.

Cynthia Close (cynthiaclose.com) earned an MFA from Boston University and worked in various art-related roles before becoming a writer and editor.



Prints, drawings and sculptures by renowned Inuit artist Kenojuak Ashevak (1927–2013) were featured in the “To Make Something Beautiful” exhibition. One of Canada’s most acclaimed graphic artists, Ashevak was known for her works of animals, humans and spirits, focusing on birds in particular.

Building a Legacy

Canada’s Feheley Fine Arts champions Inuit art, bridging traditional and contemporary culture.

By Cynthia Close

Feheley Fine Arts—housed in a 19th-century brick carriage house in the heart of Toronto’s vibrant St. Lawrence Market district—offers an ideal setting to experience Inuit art as part of a multicultural art scene. Long before founding the gallery, Patricia “Pat” Feheley gained firsthand experience in Inuit art. Beginning in 1969, she traveled to the Arctic with her father, art collector M.F. “Budd” Feheley, to meet Inuit artists in Cape Dorset. Those early encounters left a lasting impression.

A FAMILY’S JOURNEY IN ART

Budd was bitten by the art-collecting bug in the 1950s, when he bought his first piece of Inuit art. Over the next decade, he continued building relationships with the artists of Canada’s Far North, earning a reputation as a major collector and champion of Indigenous artists. When Toronto Dominion Bank (TD Bank) officials decided to build a corporate art collection in the 1960s to celebrate the bank’s centennial, they called on Budd and other savvy Canadians for guidance. The goal was to create a collection worthy of a prestigious institution while also supporting Indigenous artists in the communities where they worked.

Pat’s travels and exposure to Inuit art laid the foundation for her deep connection to it. “I was surrounded by Inuit art,” she says. “It was environmental. I never intended to end up with it [as a career]. I was in honors art history at university—my master’s was in Renaissance and Baroque iconography with a museology component—a world away from Inuit art. But I had knowledge of Inuit art, and there were no Inuit art books in those days. There was also very little research available.”

Budd’s early involvement in building the TD Bank collection also served as a baptism by fire for the younger Feheley, who took on the task of re-cataloging and updating the bank’s holdings at a later date. She went on to manage their corporate Inuit art collection through the late 1990s and into 2000.

SUPPORTING INUIT ART

Budd retired from the art business in 1992 after working as a private dealer. Pat took over his business and made it public, relocating to a larger space in 1998—though not the gallery’s current location. Her earliest exhibitions centered on the highly skilled, classic forms of Inuit art. This

Feheley Fine Arts is one of the last remaining commercial galleries in the world devoted exclusively to traditional and contemporary art from the Canadian Arctic.

included the work of Osuitok Ipeelee (1923–2005), whose elegant ivory carvings of caribou embody what we think we know about Inuit art. Ipeelee was also a talented printmaker. Pat's first exhibitions were personally eye-opening. In an interview with *Inuit Art Quarterly*, she says, "I learned a lot from those exhibitions. You can't just say, 'Here, come and buy this.' You have to position it within a continuum and talk about what aspects of these pieces are stellar."

Pat credits the discovery of the abstract drawings of Sheojuk Etidlooie (1929–99) as a definitive moment for her business. "Sheojuk was a breakthrough for me, setting a pattern that fairly quickly evolved into our gallery modus operandi," she says. "For many artists such as Shuvinai Ashoona [b. 1961] and Annie Pootoogook [1969–2016], that focus is on contemporary drawings." While sculpture and prints are the most prevalent media in collections of Inuit art, Pat prefers the intimacy of drawing. "It's my favorite form of two-dimensional art," she says.

Pat's work is built on the many years she spent visiting the artists of Cape Dorset and Baffin Island in the Far Northern homes and studios where the artists lived and created. Today, she also works directly with artists referred to as "urban Inuit" who attend colleges in the South.

Pat's reputation, built over 50 years of working collaboratively with Inuit artists as a gallerist and as a board member of the Inuit Art Foundation, is well established. This makes her advice and services indispensable for any serious collector of Indigenous Canadian art looking to either sell or build a collection. In 2022, she was appointed a Member of the Order of Canada by Governor General Mary Simon for her long-standing contributions to the Canadian art scene, as well as for her promotion of Inuit art and culture.

CONNECTING WITH NEW VOICES

While many of the Inuit artworks exhibited at Feheley Fine Arts are acquired through negotiation with artists' cooperatives located in the Far Northern territories, Pat Feheley may also work directly with an artist.

In an interview with *Inuit Art Quarterly*, she elaborates about the evolution of her acquisition process, "I've shifted from going somewhere and finding somebody who hasn't really been featured to developing these relationships with artists who are establishing themselves," Pat says. She also encourages urban Inuit artists to contact her directly through the gallery. "There are so many artists who have such great talent," she notes. "It's just gratifying and wonderful to see."

Works by historically significant artists such as Kenojuak Ashevak (1927–2013) continue to attract strong interest and achieve high prices at auction. Alongside these, the new wave of emerging artists is gaining recognition and expanding the thematic scope of Inuit art, in part thanks to the work of Feheley Fine Arts.

Pat Feheley (right) introduces gallery visitors to Inuit artist Michael Massie (left) at his solo exhibition titled "Stories in Silver and Stone."

This past summer, Pat was busier than ever, with new shows opening in the gallery through July. She also spent a great deal of time in Seattle, Wash., working on a four-year project to assess and document works, produce a catalog, and ship a large private collection of more than 2,000 pieces of Inuit artwork back to Canada.

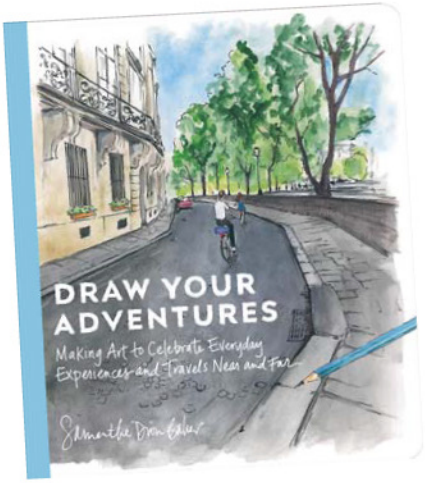
When asked how Inuit art has changed over the years and whether there's a common thread, Pat says, "If you went back 40 years, you'd see mostly sculpture and prints. Inuit art now embraces all media, but no matter how contemporary the style, there's always a cultural reference, even if it's only in the titles."

Cynthia Close (cynthiaclose.com) earned an MFA from Boston University and worked in various art-related roles before becoming a writer and editor.

Independent Study

Resources to inspire + build skills

BY BETH WILLIAMS

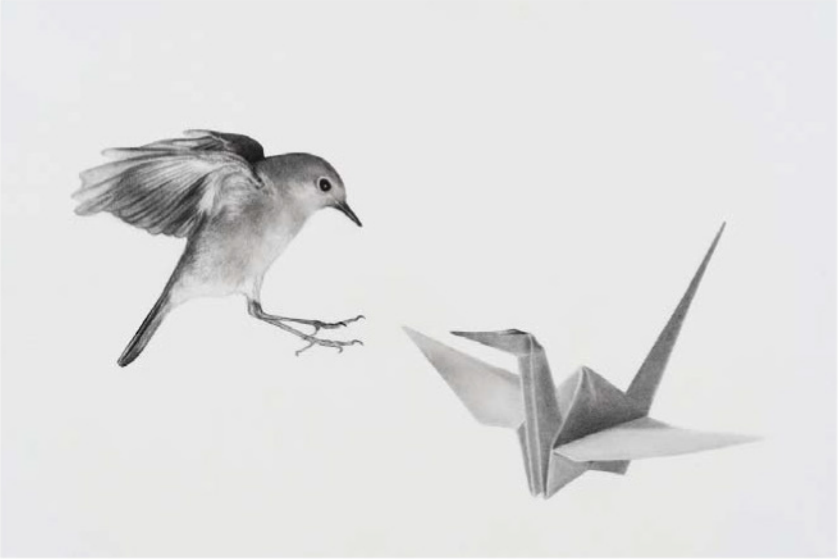

DRAW YOUR ADVENTURES
Making Art to Celebrate Everyday Experiences and Travels Near and Far
Samantha Dion Baker

DRAWN TO LIFE

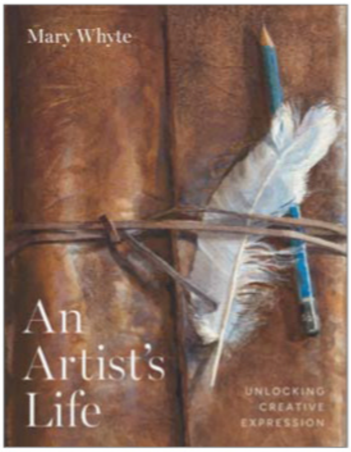
It's easy to overlook the glimpses of magic that can be seen daily in your life, but a new book—***Draw Your Adventures*** (Watson-Guptill)—helps to shine a light on the beauty of the everyday. Artist, illustrator and author Samantha Dion Baker invites you to capture life's little moments with just a sketchbook and a few mark-making tools. Through prompts, ideas, challenges, examples and scavenger hunts, she guides you to view the world through an explorer's lens, whether at home or away. This little gem of a book is the third in Baker's drawing series, joining ***Draw Your Day*** and ***Draw Your World***. If you're looking for an encouraging voice and a spark (or two or three) of inspiration, grab this book and go!

A WINNING STROKE

Meet the finalists from the Strokes of Genius 17 art competition in *The Best of Drawing*, a special publication presented by *Artists Magazine*. You'll find 100+ outstanding works to spark your creativity, along with details about each artist's inspiration and techniques. Plus, Juror of Awards Megan J. Seiter shares the importance of getting your art out into the world. Available at artistsnetwork.com/store November 11 and on newsstands December 2.

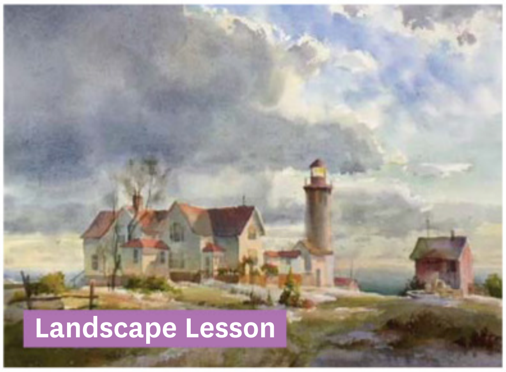


See (No. 2) (charcoal and graphite on paper, 12x18) by Traci Wright Martin



On Being Creative

"Creativity is about being ever ready for the presence of magic and viewing the world around us as if through the eyes of a child," says renowned artist, instructor and author Mary Whyte. In her inimitable generosity of spirit, she shares her own creative journey, which spans more than 50 years, and offers sage wisdom and gentle advice in ***An Artist's Life: Unlocking Creative Expression*** (University of South Carolina Press; available October 14). Whyte also spotlights 70 of her portraits alongside a collection of her never before-seen works. Seamlessly blending memoir, coffee-table elegance and loads of creative inspiration, this heartfelt volume reveals something new with every reading.



Eastern Point Lighthouse in Gloucester, Massachusetts (watercolor on paper, 12x16) by Johannes Vloothuis

Use Skies to Lead the Eye

It's well known that landscape artists often use visual paths to draw the viewer in from the foreground. These paths typically include streams, rivers or roads. But one approach that's rarely discussed is using the sky itself. If you're planning to add a cloudy sky, consider arranging the clouds in an "S" pattern to create lead-in lines. Since we naturally read from left to right, shaping the edges of the clouds to follow that flow can subtly guide the viewer's eye deeper into the painting. —Johannes Vloothuis

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

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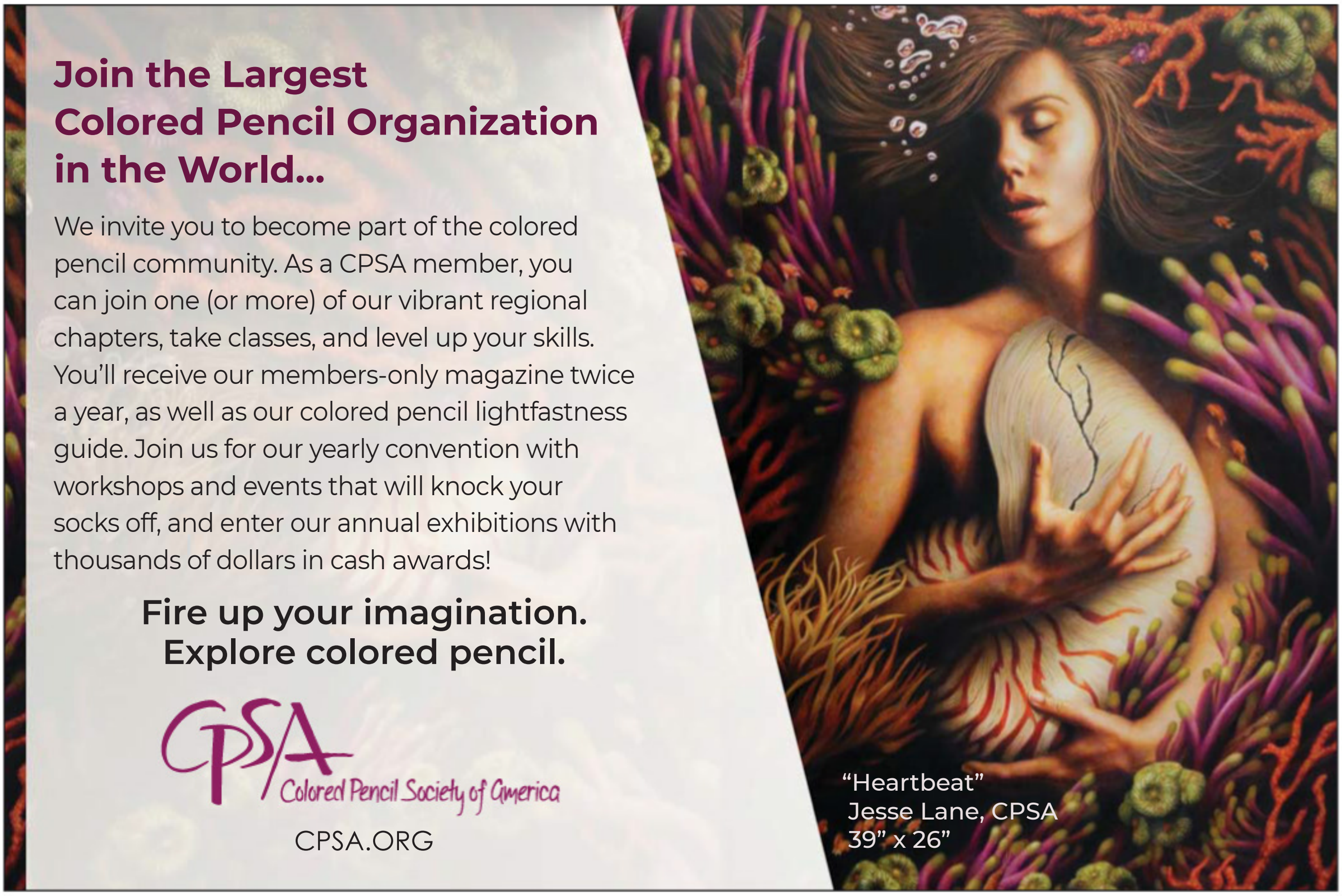
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TURNER AND CONSTABLE

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NOVEMBER 27, 2025–APRIL 12, 2026
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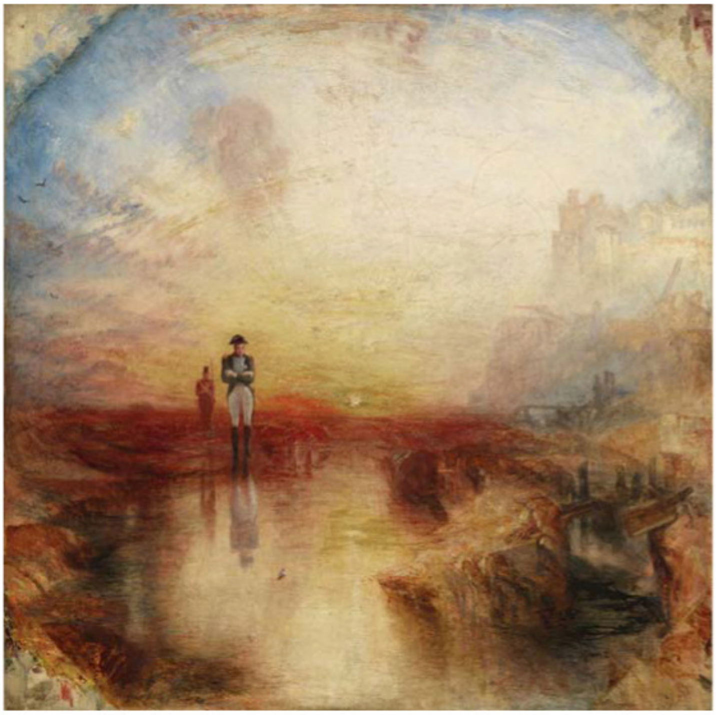
Two of Britain's greatest painters, J.M.W. Turner and John Constable, were also the greatest of rivals. Born within a year of each other—Turner in 1775, Constable in 1776—both used landscape art as a way to reflect the changing world around them.

Raised in the gritty heart of Georgian London, Turner quickly became a rising star of the art world despite his humble beginnings. Meanwhile, Constable—the son of a prosperous Suffolk merchant—was equally determined to forge his own path as an artist, but faced a more arduous rise to acclaim. Though from different worlds, they shared a profound connection to nature—and both set their sights on transforming landscape painting, investing it with layers of meaning and emotion.

With the two painters vying for success through very different but similarly bold approaches, the scene was soon set for a heady rivalry. Turner painted blazing sunrises and sunsets along with sublime scenes from his travels, while Constable often depicted a handful of beloved places, striving for freshness and authenticity in his portrayals of nature.

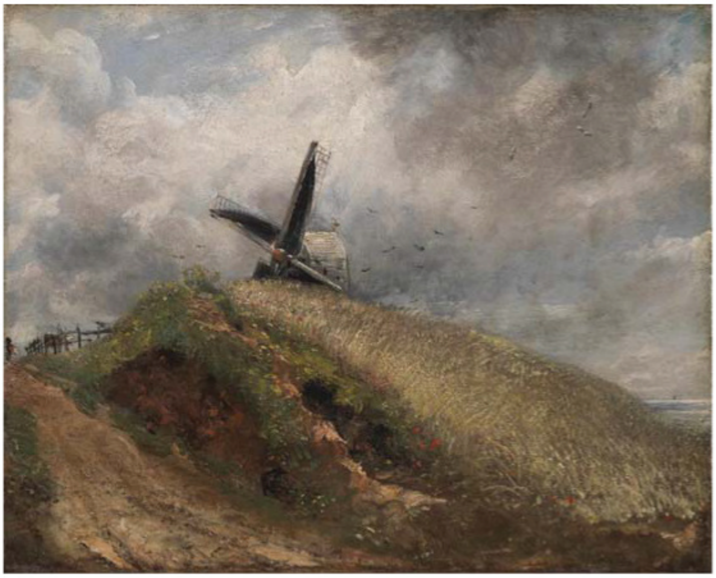
Marking 250 years since their births, this landmark exhibition explores Turner and Constable's intertwined lives and legacies. Visitors will discover unexpected sides to both artists, seen through sketchbooks and personal items. Must-see artworks include Constable's expressive cloud sketches, which capture the changing light of an English sky, and Turner's later abstracted paintings, which shocked art critics of the time and inspired French Impressionists such as Claude Monet (1840–1926).

The exhibition is a unique opportunity to explore the careers of two of Britain's greatest landscape painters, seen—as they often were in their own time—side by side.



War. The Exile and the Rock Limpet
(oil on canvas, 31¼x31¼) by J.M.W. Turner

ACCEPTED BY THE NATION AS PART OF THE TURNER BEQUEST, 1856. N00529



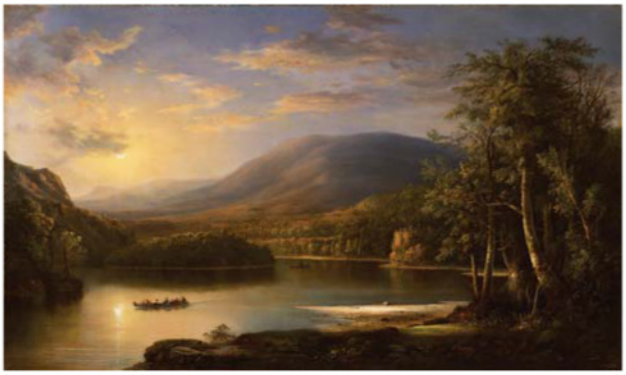
A Windmill Near Brighton
(oil on canvas, 8x10) by John Constable

BEQUEATHED BY GEORGE SALTING, 1910. N02657

Michigan

REIMAGINING AFRICAN AMERICAN ART

THE DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ARTS
OPENS OCTOBER 18, 2025
DIA.ORG



Ellen's Isle, Loch Katrine (oil on canvas, 28½x49) by Robert S. Duncanson
GIFT OF THE ESTATE OF RALZEMOND D. PARKER. F80.215

The Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA) began collecting African American art in 1943. In 2000, the DIA established the Center for African American Art and, in 2001, appointed the first curator dedicated to African American art in an encyclopedic American museum, signaling the institution's ongoing support and celebration of African American art and history.

Now, for the first time since 2007, the DIA is reinstalling its African American galleries to showcase new works in the museum's collection in concert with existing favorites. "Reimagining African American Art" highlights the collection by moving the galleries to one of the museum's most prominent spaces. This transformative reinstallation traces the development of African American art from the 1800s, when a few African Americans overcame tremendous challenges to become professional artists, to the 1980s, when some Black artists began to receive long overdue national and international recognition.

Tracing the evolution of African American culture, the collection provides a powerful lens into the lives, achievements and resilience of Black artists. Four dedicated galleries explore key historical movements, including the Harlem Renaissance, Social Realism, the Civil Rights era and the Black Arts Movement. The reinstalled galleries feature a variety of media including drawings, prints, paintings, photography and sculpture.

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION (required by Act of August 12, 1970: Section 3685, Title 39, United States Code). 1. Artists Magazine 2. (ISSN: 0741-3351) 3. Filing date: 08/28/25. 4. Issue frequency: Bimonthly. 5. Number of issues published annually: 6. 6. The annual subscription price is $39.95. 7. Complete mailing address of known office of publication: Peak Media Properties, LLC, 350 Indiana Street, Suite 550, Golden, CO 80401-6569. Contact person: Deborah Paolello. 8. Complete mailing address of headquarters or general business office of publisher: Peak Media Properties, LLC, 350 Indiana Street, Suite 550, Golden, CO 80401-6569. 9. Full names and complete mailing addresses of publisher, editor, and managing editor. 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WORKSHOPS 2024

Your Complete Guide to Workshops Here and Abroad

Huntsville Museum of Art

October 23-25, 2025, Alabama, Jill Stefani Wagner, PSA-MP, IAPS/MC, GLPS, Finding Light and Inspiration in Your Photo References in Pastel
November 07, 2025, Alabama, Alan Shuptrine, Watercolor Sunset Landscapes
February 06-07, 2026, Alabama, Carole Forêt, Compelling Paintings Inspired by the Everyday Photo
March 19-22, 2026, Alabama, David Lobenberg, California Vibe Watercolor Portraiture™
June 05-07, 2026, Alabama, Elder Jones, Wet Concrete Carving
June 11-13, 2026, Alabama, Qiang Huang, Still Life Oil Painting
September 14-17, 2026, Alabama, Tony Couch, Watercolor Painting
Contact: Laura E. Smith, Director of Education/Museum Academy, 256-535-6372
lsmith@hsvmuseum.org or hsvmuseum.org

Transparent Watercolor Society of America

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Lightbulb Moments: Mastering Transparency in Watercolor
June 08-10, 2026, Chicagoland/Kenosha
Carrie Waller, TWSA, AWS, NWS
Steeped in Light: Watercolor Techniques for Glass and Liquid
June 03-05, 2026, Chicagoland/Kenosha
Stewart White, AWS, NWS, White of the Paper — An in-depth examination of the power of using the paper effectively.
June 08-10, 2026, Chicagoland/Kenosha
Stewart White, AWS, NWS, Know the Law to Break the Rules.
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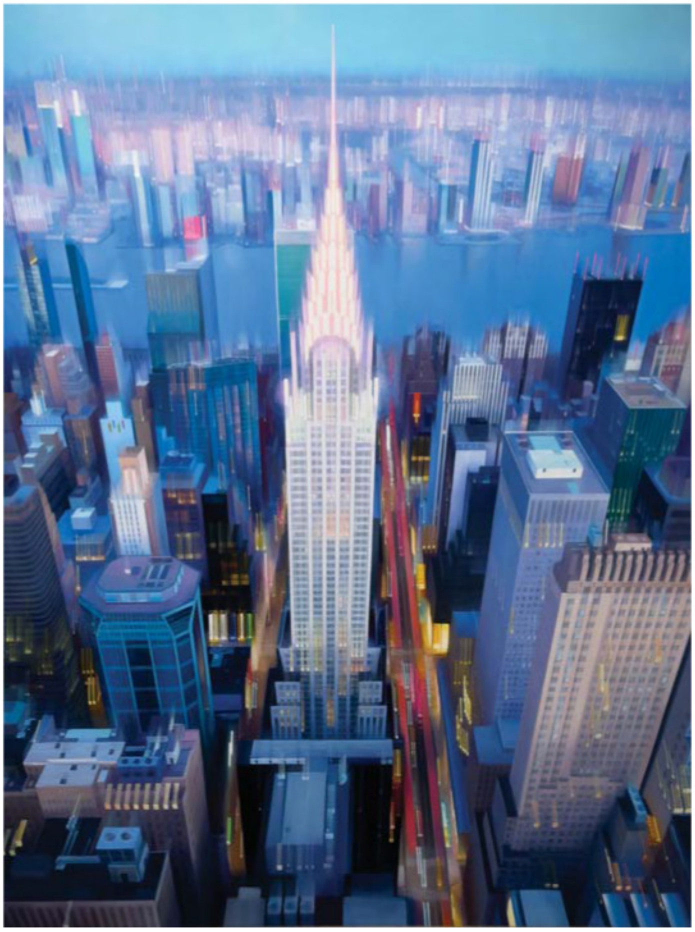
or contact: Linda, 815-814-8187 or workshops@watercolors.org

The next Workshop Section will appear in the Artists Magazine January/February 2026 issue. Space Reservation is by January 9, 2026. Newsstand Date is March 3, 2026.

Picture This



Luminous Icon (oil on linen, 64x48)

> *In this work, I explore early evening light—that transitional* moment when the city begins to illuminate itself, yet the sky retains the softness of day. The shift to a lighter, more subdued color scheme presented a unique challenge, as I sought to produce the soft tones of twilight, while also maintaining the luminosity and dynamic energy of the urban environment that characterizes my work. I'm particularly pleased with how the lower portion of the painting features strong contrast and a glowing effect, suggesting the pulsing life of the streets. As the eye moves upward, the forms gradually dissolve into the surrounding atmosphere, creating a sense of impermanence. Visible brushwork, softened edges and blended transitions enhance the atmospheric effect and contribute to the sense of movement, fading light, vibrance and serenity.

ALEXANDRA PACULA

The artist's large-scale paintings of cities at night have been exhibited at venues throughout the U.S., and in England, France, Spain and Russia. Learn more about the Polish-born, Brooklyn-based artist at alexandrapaculaart.com.

TWSA

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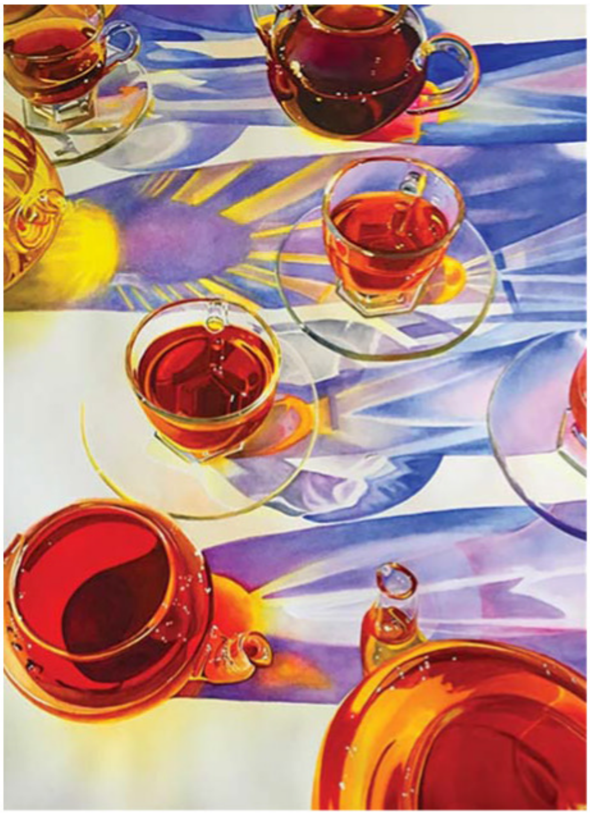

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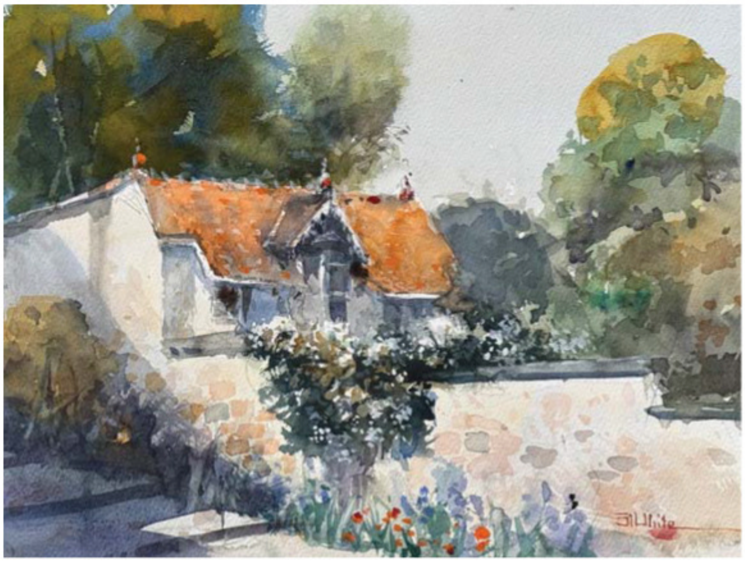
Carrie Waller, TWSA, AWS, NWS

June 3-5 Lightbulb Moments: Mastering Transparency in Watercolor

June 8-10 Steeped in Light: Watercolor Techniques for Glass and Liquid

Rising Sun by Carrie Waller



Cottage Wall, Auvers-Sur-Oise by Stewart White

Stewart White, AWS, NWS

June 3-5 White of the Paper

An in-depth examination of the power of using the paper effectively

June 8-10 Know the Law to Break the Rules

Exhibition Dates

May 2 to August 2, 2026
Kenosha Public Museum
Kenosha, Wisconsin

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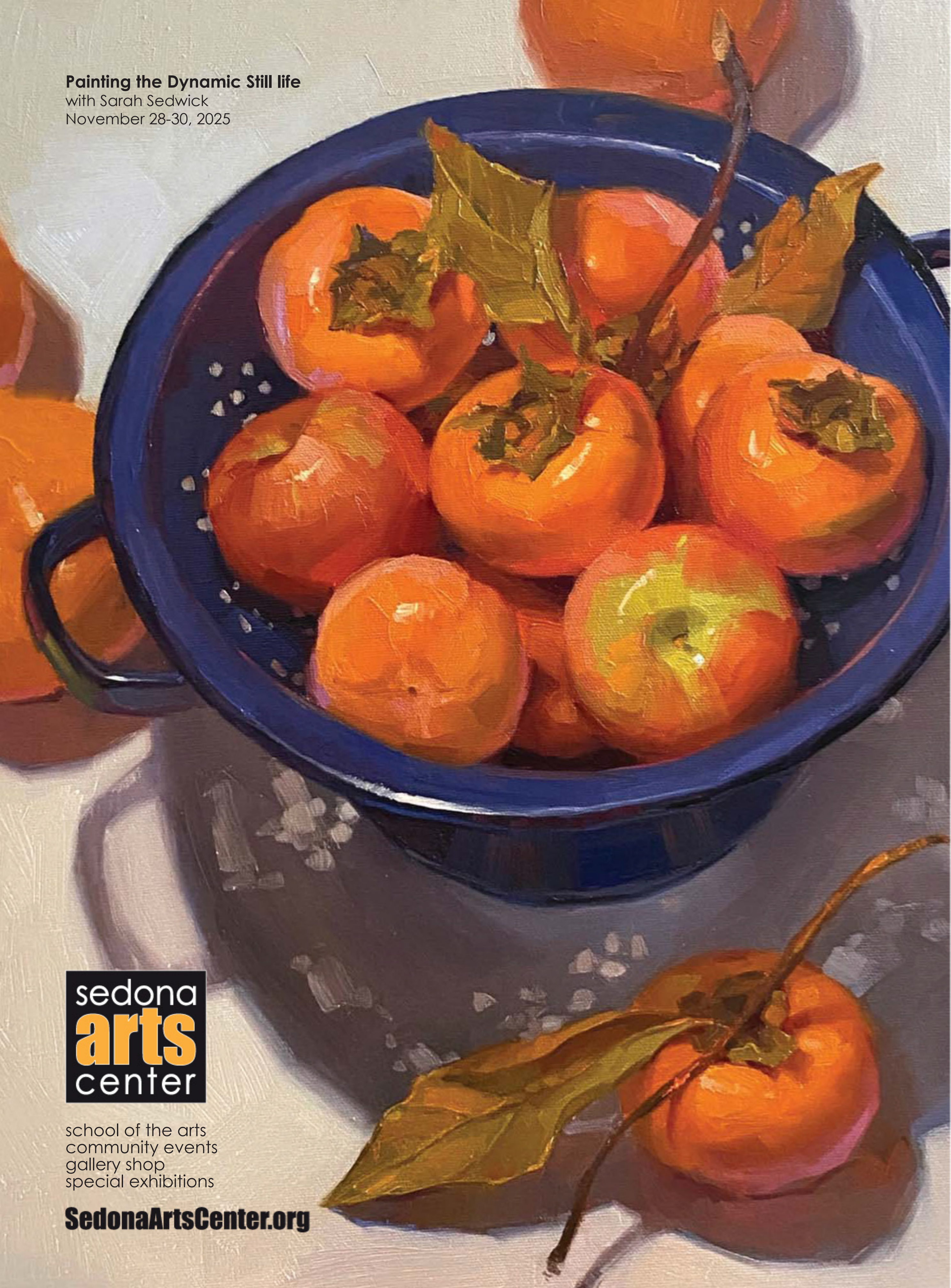

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